

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW

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Interview

CHARLES SHEFFIELD

A WRITER'S NATURAL ENEMY

EDITORS

BY GEORGE R. R. MARTIN

NOISE LEVEL

By John Brunner

**YOU GOT NO FRIENDS
IN THIS WORLD**

BY ORSON SCOTT CARD

*Darrell
Schweitzer*

*Elton T.
Elliott*

NEWS

CARTOONS



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WELL, GO BACK AND TELL
 ROCCO TO STAY THE HELL
 OUT OF TOPOLOGY! AND
 THAT GOES FOR HIS DAMN
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 DONALD A. WOLLHEIM

"WHAT IS HARLAN ELLISON REALLY
 LIKE?" A PROFILE BY CHARLES
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ALIEN THOUGHTS



BY THE EDITOR

7-31-79 I had been expecting a call from Hank Stine, editor of GALAXY, asking me to get another book review column into the mail to him. (Yes, yes, with the collaboration and intrusion of Alter-Ego!), so when he called yesterday I expected that request...which didn't come. We talked---err, he talked---about other things. I did glean that perhaps GALAXY is not yet on its promised bi-monthly schedule.

One thing I've noticed about the editors of GALAXY---they are all in my experience (Jim Baen, J.J. Pierce, Hank Stine) talkers! It is difficult to get words in edgewise. (It was easiest with J.J.)

The fault may lie more with me than them, however, since I am not a powerful in-person personality and refuse to get into power-struggles during conversations. Perhaps (probably) the high-pressure atmosphere of New York or big-mag editing in general requires a strong verbal personality. Mayhap the quiet introvert is doomed to obscurity in the big-time of s-f editing.

I've said many times my personality is in my fingertips...on the typewritten page. And I'm not interested in editing a major science fiction prozine. Too much hassle, too much drudge reading.

These entries tend to drift. Now I'm tempted to discuss SFR's future. Yes, it has a future.

To those who know my cynical, pessimistic outlook, that may seem a contrary statement. If the nation and probably the world is doomed to depression and stagnation for umpteen years, wither SFR? In fact, wither science fiction?

Science fiction, sometimes combined with fantasy and horror and the occult, has become a recognized money-maker, especially in the film industry. The space programs of the USA and Russia have suffused the basic elements of science fiction throughout the USA and the industrialized world for a generation. Space isn't strange anymore. Space technology isn't weird; it's prosaic, accepted.

So science fiction is accepted as 'legitimate' entertainment and enterprise. With that solid base in cultural and social acclimatization, s-f will continue for generations at its present acceptance level. But it will rise and fall with the general economy.

There will probably be cycles within cycles---sword and sorcery may flourish in the movies before long... and hard s-f may languish... But the genre as a whole is part of the publishing-entertainment territory now, and will not fade away.

The future of SFR is linked, obviously to my future. And I expect to survive with SFR through at least another four years, as a quarterly.

The worst-case scenario is a terrible world-wide depression brought on by the energy cost crunch and a subsequent deflation as the debt structure collapses. S-f publishing and movie-making would collapse correspondingly. I could sink to a few hundred subscribers, and return to publishing SFR on the trusty Gestetner mimeo. But that would permit greater focus on what little s-f was produced, and an appreciation of the best of s-f from the current boom. Buying and selling and trading of used s-f would be a big thing.

Life do go on.
The best-case outlook is for SFR to manage to attract enough new subscribers to offset those who must give it up for various reasons.

As the economy declines I'll be cutting down on the amount of material I buy and putting in more of my own writings. Probably more of my own science fiction. For instance, I'm thinking very seriously of continuing the ONE IMMORTAL MAN saga in SFR in novelet segments, instead of novel lengths. Because serializing a novel in a quarterly involves maybe a year, and readers get pissed at the long waits. Complete-in-themselves novelet adventures are more appropriate.

I imagine that personal journal will also suffer erosion, and maybe become a victim of the times as a separate entity. If that journal sinks to under 200 subbers from the present stable 500, I anticipate merging it (again) into SFR as a long column as was "Reports From Alternate Earth 666" in SFR #25.

All this is speculation, of course. I love it. I'm a hopeless predictor and viewer-of-trends. It's a way of testing my view of reality against the real thing. And I'm more and more willing to put my money where my mouth is.

At present I'm hunkering down for the long haul; cutting risk and cutting expenses. I may go back to newspaper for SFR if the savings are significant and necessary.

Well, enough of this fun; I've got to turn my fingers to REG and the behind-schedule segment of the sex-drenched serial, SPLITTING.

LETTER FROM IRWIN M. PROHLO
POB 92893
Milwaukee, WI 53202
April 30, 1979

'TO YOUR READERS ON THE STATE OF SF SALES/READERS:

'The market had best realize where the money (fans) are -- in the 10-23 year-old range mostly. The ones who were turned on by STAR WARS, B.S. GALACTICA, STAR TREK, etc and are buying the \$1.75 and \$1.95 cheap-shot mags that rehash old movie stills and blurb the new movies.

'Yes, Ellison and others want the respectability of being known as writers of "speculative fiction", not *science fiction*, (the old bugaboo about BEH's and space opera)" and others kow-tow toward the attentions of Academia, while others attempt to politicize, socialize or categorize SF.

'True, SF has gained in "respectability" in the past couple years -- and some fine writing is being cranked out, reprinted or rehashed -- but the few respected names and the vocal minority cannot keep the trend going -- it's the buying public who will determine that.

'Before I go further about buying habits, I'd like to address the older readers who may recall the first SF they picked up on -- be it AMAZING STORIES of the 30s, 40s, 50s or 60s; ASTOUNDING of the 30s & 40s; STARTLING STORIES, THRILLING WONDER, PLANET or even WEIRD TALES, when Ed Hamilton wrote his space

* Harlan, I see your letters in PLANET's Visigraph!

fantasies. Maybe it was Buck Rogers, Flash Gordon or Edgar Rice Burroughs, in the comics, Big Little Books, or such. But it was that "sense of wonder" -- the thrill of other worlds (thanks RAP), adventure that held us -- not ponderous tomes about sociological themes, or long-winded arguments about "quality of life" or the future SF, or New Wave, etc.

'Someone has to tap that market -- ignoring the sneers and jeers of the "elite corps". So-called hackneyed plots are not that when you're 12, 14 or 22, reading it for pleasure or the first time. Where did Asimov begin? -- AMAZING STORIES... Bradbury -- PLANET ... Poul Anderson -- space opera in PLANET. Young writers writing for young readers.

'We need a few young magazines... ASIMOV'S SF ADVENTURE may be the answer. Perhaps AMAZING will revive, or FANTASTIC.

'What do you give your kids to read? Or someone just getting into it? A few books available here and there.

'Now, back to buying habits. I want to take on the publishers -- paperback, on the subject of reprints. How can they justify 1.95 reprints that have seen seventeen or perhaps dozens of editions? Economics? Bullshit. They made it ten times over and could make it ten times again if they'd put out dollar editions of Heinlein, ERB, Van Vogt, etc. Why stand a Heinlein juvenile or an ERB against the glut of all the other books? They get lost in the crunch. If they were cheap enough for the 10, 12 or 18 year-old to pick up quick, they'd sell more. When they lowered the bus fares more people rode, filling half-empty buses. And when the entrance fee to the fairs was slumped, families came. Sure, drek slips in -- but the public would soon zero in on the publisher and stop buying. There were/are some Laurel Leaf pbs that are "classics" and Scholastic puts out SF within the reach of pre-teens and teen readers. Put some PLANET covers on them (!)*

'I haunt the second-hand shops and SF is the fastest-moving item, especially at 50¢ or 75¢ or \$1.00. More people are reading as an alternate form of entertainment as opposed to the expense of going out or watching formula TV. And buying second-hand.

* Howls of outraged feminists -- visions of the 50s when I began reading SF, when teachers would snatch (and destroy?) SF mags (no -- read 'em at home, or in the can.)

'So dust off those old space operas, boys, and plug in the Xeno, Frogeyes -- old Sarge may thud through the door any day now.'

((Intellectually, I agree with you, Irvin--juvenile sf with lotsa sense of wonder is a sure-fire formula; you get all those new readers, generation after generation...and you keep all those older readers who never tire of it.

((But...I'm of that ever-increasing group who eventually tire or have tired of the juvenile in sf, and want not serious, "mature" sf full of character and message, but action, suspense, sense of wonder AND some sex and realism in background and foreground and characterization. What of us?))

LETTER FROM MIKE GIRSDANSKY

77 Carpenter Avenue, #5J
Mt. Kisco, NY 10549
15 May 1979

'I wonder if anyone has commented on the rather odd handling (I don't mean hanky-panky) with regard to Farmer's last volume(s) in the Riverboat series. In THE DARK DESIGN he explains that what was originally to be the last book proved so long that it was infeasible to print it as one volume.

'This raises two questions: (1) Oh yeah? Shirer's book on the Third Reich was unusually thick, as was Toler's bio of Hitler. (Maybe there's something about Germanic themes which leads to literary elephantiasis; and (2) If there was some structural logistic reason why the final volume couldn't come out as one, why not bring out the new two simultaneously, or at least close together? Not, as I've heard rumored, wait until next October. I, for one, am doomed to spend a number of months chewing away at the inside of my cheek in impatience waiting for the final (!) wrap-up.'

((Phil Farmer obviously changed his writing style as he wrote the RIVERBOAT saga; he became self-indulgent, wordy, and mercenary. When you've got a hit on your hands you string it out, milk it, and dance on the line between too obviously ripping off the readers and not ripping them off enough. The editors and publishers are more often than not the prime movers in those decisions, with which the writer usually eagerly agrees, big bucks dancing in his mind.

((Now, if I had such a hit saga going, I, too, would seek the highest return on my work. That's the nature of the beast...and the nature of The Market. Only idealists and fools (same thing, I guess) expect otherwise. The reader wants as much as possible for his money, and the writer-editor-publisher want to give as little as possible for as much as possible. They meet at the grey area of the "buy" decision.))

The GALAXY situation is still bothering a lot of people (with good cause). I have a letter from JIM SANDERSON which arrived too late for last issue.

July 2, 1979

'After waiting three months for the issue of GALAXY numbered Vol.39, No.9, I wrote to S. John Loscocco (president of Elm, the company that has taken over GALAXY) and I received a reply today.

'Vol.39, No.9 was mailed approximately two weeks ago and you should have it by now. Vol.39, No.10 will be mailed to subscribers on July 9 and issues after that should be received within a couple of weeks of newsstand appearance (before or after I'm not sure). All subscriptions have been lengthened to accommodate the new bi-monthly publishing schedule.'

Okay, thanks, Jim, for going to the horse's mouth. I'm rather ambiguous in my feelings about GALAXY. On the one hand I'm happy to be doing a column for it and happy to be paid in advertising for SFR for each column. Some of the success of SFR is due to the years and years (how quickly they go!) of ads in GALAXY.

But I've seen the magazine go through a long decline of quality and reliability ever since H.L. Gold left the editor's chair. I suspect most of the problem has been the fault of the ownership which I think milked the magazine to support other, failing, activities of the corporation, and who refused to allow the editors enough money to do their job at a high level.

But at the same time the subsequent editors haven't struck out in any exciting, bold directions in format or fiction choice; it's been a middle-of-the-road science fiction magazine, of a slightly higher quality with some editors, less so with others.

At the moment AMAZING and FANTASTIC are the most interesting pro-mags because of their radical visual and content changes and experiments.

Steve Fahnstalk, long-time SFR reader and Washington state fan has been made funzine/small press reviewer/commentator for AMAZING.

I've heard various and sundry reports and rumors to the effect that pocketbook sales are down about 10-15%, and that publishers are worried, starting to cut back....

I told Richard Witter in a letter recently that publishers (including me!) are no longer competing for the public's beer money. [Does a \$.25 pocketbook equal a six-pack of beer?]

I said we are now, going into hard times and a lowering standard of living, and publishers are going to be in competition for food and rent money, maybe even cigaret \$\$.

The bookreading public is becoming much more selective and careful. And the boom is ended.

Looking at the sf magazines--GALAXY, ASIMOV'S, AMAZING, FANTASTIC, UNEARTH, GALILEO, even ANALOG and FESF--I see essentially juvenile packages. Still. After all these years. And as I read the fiction I see taboos, censorship, a lack of guts, a lack of boldness. Most of the editors are still afraid of Mom seeing a nasty word in Junior's magazine and Complaining to the Drug Store or the Supermarket or *Cringe* the Distributor!

Most sf and fantasy in the magazines and in the pocketbooks is bland, boring, derivative and the same-old-shit.

And this same-old-shit is in direct competition with TV and theater sf and fantasy that is so easy to take--no effort involved!--and usually a visual delight with all kinds of special effects. The kids love it. The kids would rather see STAR WARS for the fifth time than spend \$1.50 for a dumb, blah sf magazine. And when you get to the main audience for science fiction--the college-age people--you have the same situation, only they would rather see an R-rated good movie, an ALIEN, for instance, or buy a hot rock record, or a HEAVY METAL issue, than a dumb sf magazine full of the same-old-shit they read when they were fifteen.

Sf magazine are asking people to do some work--read!--when all this easy visual and aural s-f and fantasy--all this other mindblowing stuff is available. All this color and movement and sound!

Sit alone and read? For what? What do they get out of it? Dull, unexciting, predictable shit.

No wonder sf magazines are in trouble. It isn't the size of the zines, the price, the black-and-

white poor quality artwork. It's the content of the stories.

In an effort to counter the same-old-shit fiction, AMAZING and FANTASTIC are using a lot of illustrations, a lot of non-fiction features....

When Ted White tried, briefly, to open up the magazines with some challenging, disturbing, 'offensive' stories, all hell broke loose. A few fans and perhaps the publisher cried out in agony. He stopped.

Now he's editing HEAVY METAL, and probably happy as a clam, able to give adult, exciting, bold material to people who are used to it from movies and real life!

What, am I advocating a display of sex and violence?

Damn right! A mixture of bold ideas that when appropriate use sex and/or violence [realism!] to tell the story. THE STORY!

This is an R-rated world, in real life and in entertainment, and printed s-f and fantasy have to compete in this world--or die off to a small enclave, a 1930s size readership.

The next two or three years will see a lot of sf magazines bite the dust, a lot of hardcover and soft-cover editors of sf and fantasy out of jobs. They'll blame the recession and the times...but mostly they won't blame themselves for not giving the public what it will pay for.

People are willing to read if they think it's worth it. In this world of easy visual entertainment, the reading experience has to be exciting, tensioned, basic, and realistic. [And it should be accompanied by good like-kind artwork and the print size should be easy-to-read.] Failing that...there'll be far fewer reviews in SFR in the years ahead--for lack of books and magazines.

8-12-79 Several thoughtful fans have sent me the story that appeared in the Washington Post and other papers concerning Alice Sheldon's determination not to get a license from the Fairfax County government for the privilege of writing science fiction.

Seems the county, in its zeal to fleece its citizenry of every penny possible, has, since 1970, included writing-for-profit as a category in its "specialized occupation license" group.

The license costs nothing. It is simply a "flag" to let the county insist on 31¢ tax for every \$100. earned by writing. But if the gross profit is \$3,226 or less a year the license-holder owes nothing.

Alice Sheldon will go to jail before she'll apply for the license, she says. She risks a fine of as much as \$300., or a jail term up to 30 days, or both.

She fears that the licensing of writers could be used to inhibit or censor or deny writers their First Amendment rights.

Alice Sheldon is better known as James Tiptree, Jr.

Alice is right. This seems at first as merely a revenue-raising device with no strings attached to the content of the writing involved. But it is a thin entering wedge. A time would come when the county or state or federal government might say: "No one may write for profit unless they have a license."

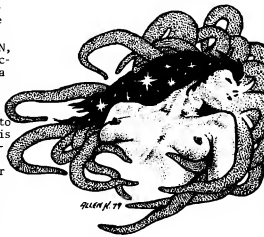
That would be to insure that all writing income would be subject to a tax. Sounds reasonable, to make sure no tax cheating goes on?

But then would come the strings; certain subjects or words or themes or beliefs would not be allowed to be used in the writings of all licensed writers "in the public interest." And no unlicensed writers would be allowed to be published...or would be fined and/or jailed for illegal activities.

Perhaps more subtle devices could or would be used: certain writers would not have their licenses renewed for various nit-picky and phony reasons...or would have their licenses delayed for months (a neat discouragement to someone who couldn't earn a living during that period) because of delays in processing....

And Congress could pass a law that made it illegal for any publisher to use the work of an unlicensed writer. "Federal Writer License Number must appear on title page of manuscript."

I'm sure many, many writers would welcome such a system; it would cut out competition since those with licenses would probably be able to impose "craft tests and quotas" to make sure [like doctors and lawyers and plumbers and etc.] that they would be assured a good income.



They would eagerly embrace government control of writers in exchange for a lock on a guaranteed wage, etc. Souls and freedom are sold surprisingly cheaply more often than not.

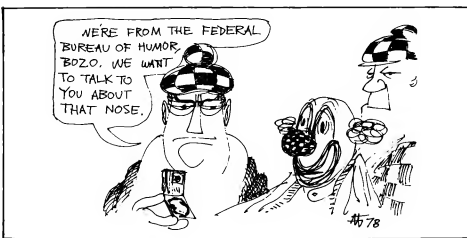
A free press requires free writers. Any attempt to control writers must be resisted. "Innocent" writer licensing laws are a tiny step in the direction of political control of writers. One step leads to another, and the temptations are always too much for "well-meaning" people to resist; in their minds the ends always justify the means, and they always clothe their ends as Good, and always justify their means as necessary.

LETTER FROM IAN WATSON

Bay House, Banbury Road,
Moreton Pinkney (near Daventry)
Northamptonshire NN11 6SQ
England
13th August 1979

'After nine years in Oxford, three in Tokyo and two in Africa, we have moved into this little village Moreton Pinkney a few miles from the George Washington-associated village of Sulgrave. Wiped out by the Black Death, rebuilt over the hill to become notorious as the "village of pigs and paupers" when great savage pigs roamed the mud lanes and the paupers drowned their sorrows in the five pubs there once were here, it is looking rather more prosperous and perky nowadays, inhabited by farmers, horse people, an antique dealer, someone who is into bull semen -- a sticky business, a Swiss precision steel cooking utensil salesman, an Archdeacon, a USAF jet pilot, the president of the Bronte Society who has converted the smithy on the village green into his 19th century library, sundry old ladies with white hair, the Nigerian staff of an enigmatic millionaire who wants his own landing strip.

'Silverstone Racing Circuit is quite near, and occasional bursts of traffic zip through the serpentine village, interspersed with herds of sheep -- off, said our daughter Jessica (who you can tell has been living in a town for a while), to be milked. A juggernaut lorry gasps to a halt behind a donkey cart, aged ramblers in stout boots and anoraks consult their maps for the church where Cromwell's men wiped out the local royalists with a fusillade, leaving bullets in the wall, and a cycling party of Vietnamese or Malaysians zips down the hill. They certainly looked like Vietnamese -- not Japanese or Chinese, certainly.



'And we have Realized Something. Namely, that Moreton Pinkney -- which you may perhaps not be able to find on any map -- is actually the exact center of the universe. This realization isn't limited to us. The man who is into bull semen pointed out in the pub the other night (at about midnight -- there's no police force in the village, so the pub merely locks the drinkers in at closing time instead of tossing them out) that Moreton Pinkney is the center of absolute motion, the still point around which everything else turns; and another fellow was bemoaning the fact that he couldn't escape from the place.

'But, Lord, we have seen more going past our window and overhead than we ever did in the heart of Oxford: Horses, vintage cars, Silverstone racers, jet planes, geese, helicopters, Vietnamese bicyclists. The bay window where I'm writing this -- distracted by geese, jets, Vietnamese, hikers, Archdeacons, etc. -- faces the Scottish baronial-towered lodge gate and gatehouse of the Manor, owned by somebody in Panama's electricity supply. Windmill bird-scarers turn lazily on the walled allotments rising on the other side. Tomorrow we put up a signboard at the end of the village: The Exact Center of the Universe.

'Did I say it's a horsey place too? Girls tittup past on their show-jumping steeds, the Hunt meets outside our window in the winter (keep the cats indoors that day), and the wallpaper of this room where I've shelved my SF books is all cartoons (by Thelwell) who specialises in fat pompous girls on fat pompous ponies, which are thus visible galloping, snorting and water-jumping across my books from GATEWAY to SHADRACH IN THE FURNACE, a curious spectacle.

'More news from the exact center of the universe another time...'

((I have an alien here, in my head, who insists that the center of the universe is somewhere over near the Coal Sack. But I think we are all the center of the universe---solipsismwise.))

LETTER FROM MICHAEL CONNER

106 Adele Ct
Pleasant Hill, CA 94523
August 8, 1979

'I found issue #32 fascinating, with Mr. Offutt on a hand enthusing about pre-gunpowder worlds, followed by Mr. Card, who hates to be dirty, telling us that only technology can give us clean air and toilets (and typewriters). Such pronouncements always amaze me with their delivery of solid assurances, as if the speaker has been down our current path ahead of the rest of us!

'Face it ... we can't expect anyone living today to offer more than a best guess as to how to proceed politically, socially, and economically when we're actually groping forward alone, without a plan, attempting to organize ourselves by trial-and-error. The past can only help us partially to cope with a six-billion planetary population (and the structures which have arisen to help maintain it, however spottily); yet technology is nothing but inexperienced. Sheer bulk of information is not equivalent to knowledge. I think I would definitely keep the past in mind as new solutions are offered up by the technocracy, however.

'I'm sure that Card's interview will stir negative response, with such statements as, "just so I can get rich, invest it wisely, and not need acceptance by then..." He's just stating what many other people believe without admitting it to themselves, and, what's probably

worse, more than likely he'll succeed. I say, go for it, Orson Scott Card! As someone who started writing SF at about the same time as he, I've felt what I'm sure must be the usual professional jealousy toward his rapid rise to prominence. What I've read of him was through the jaundiced eye. But Card is apparently quite popular with readers, and competent enough in the craft to avoid embarrassment. He ought to be proud of himself -- and quite deservedly so. Five years of just writing, successfully or not, is one hell of a lot of work.

'I found Card's views on the collapse of the West striking on another account. I've always believed that, when the Federal System finally disintegrates into a loose, nostalgia-beset confederation of independent regions, an isolationist "greater Utah", hostile to both East and West and functioning as a closed-border buffer zone between the two might wind up as the strongest (economically, militarily, and more than likely, spiritually) political entity in North America.

'Perhaps it's fortunate for Card that he lives in the capital of this state-to-be -- though, I don't think it will arrive so quickly as he imagines. Our public "reality" will take an appropriate amount of time to die.'

(As a citizen of Ecotopia (Northern California, Oregon, Washington) I welcome the formation of the Greater Utah Federation (Mormonia?) and hope our two independent countries can live side by side in peace--- and form an alliance against SoCal and the remnant of what used to be the U.S.A.))

LETTER FROM FRED FOWLER
200 Laura Lane, #86
Rocky Hill, CT 06067
August 25, 1979

'As of October 16, 1979, my mailing address will be 1442-C, North Cliff Valley Way, N.E., Atlanta, GA, 30319. My old address was given in the heading.

'Your worry about the susceptibility of complex technology to failure is quite reasonable, but if you had read some of the later news on Three Mile Island that has appeared in SCIENCE, you would know that most of the equipment failure in that accident was caused by the technicians who were on duty. Investigators have learned that the emergency cooling system did not do its job properly because the reactor operators would not let it do

its job. They refused to believe the reactor temperature that was being shown by the instruments, and would not let the cooling system flood the reactor core with water. There was nothing wrong with the safety equipment, and it did not fail; it was the incompetence of the operators that caused a relatively small difficulty to grow into a major accident.

((Sure, but in the real world you cannot separate the technology from its operators...and "human error" is a constant that must be factored into the total equation of help/harm.))

'Whether or not government censorship ever comes into being in this country, we already have something just as dangerous in the long run: The indirect suppression of unpopular and unfashionable ideas, beliefs and opinions by the men who control the publishing business.

'One of the latest issues of THE NATIONAL REVIEW has an article on this: The author points out that modern journalists have become so arrogant that they don't even make a pretense of being objective; they consider themselves to be demigods who have rights and prerogatives denied to the common writer. They are self-appointed Guardians of the Constitution and The People's Right to Know. When any court decision in favor of the individual rights of the citizen threatens the powers that journalists have arrogated to themselves, they write editorials warning that the death of America's free press is imminent.

'The free press! As if the press in this country were really free. The newspapers in this country are controlled by advertisers and by the handful of men who own the large publishing companies. They are free only in the sense that they can publish whatever their owners want them to publish. But their owners will not publish anything that attacks their view of the world, or threatens their power. Try to find a single article or even a single letter in any newspaper that attacks the modern institution of advertising. Newspapers will not publish anything that does this, because they dare not anger their advertisers.

'Nor do modern journalists give us the truth in what they write. They say "the people's right to know" but they mean "the people's right to know what we want them to know, what we think they ought to know". Over thirty years ago Dorothy Sayers told how the press of

her country had used distortion, false emphasis, suppression of facts and outright lies when it reported anything that she said or did. Journalists have not changed since then. We still do not get the truth from them.

((How true. Smears abound, too, and go uncorrected and mostly unremarked; witness the current enthusiastic smear of Hamilton Jordan, President Carter's White House Chief of Staff in re cocaine use and sexual nanky-panky and crude behavior in general.

((Wide reading of news and opinion magazines and journals is required for a fairly true view of things-as-they-is-and-why.))

'Now for Poul Anderson's letter: Why is it that so many modern writers believe that they must put uninteresting matter in their stories merely because it is a part of actual life? Sexual intercourse is the greatest bodily pleasure that there is, but it is not a very interesting thing to read about. I will say nothing here about the moral rightness or wrongness of describing it in a story. But I will say that if authors want people to read their books, they would do well to keep the sexual episodes to a minimum. Otherwise, they will cause most readers to yawn and skip over large parts of their books.'

((ANY aspect of life, even murder, can be uninteresting and even boring, if disengaged from character, personality, and other story dynamics. If sexual intercourse in fiction is "meaningless" it is because the author failed; it doesn't mean that all sex in all stories is a drag and should be skipped.))

GOD, THAT'S GROSS
A PAMMY HILL



LETTER FROM CHARLES PLATT
70 Ledbury Road, London, W 11
August 4, 1979

'In response to your comments in the current SFR about libel:

'I cannot agree with you that fear of lost income or of a damaged reputation would prompt someone to bring a libel action against your magazine. If you print a trivial insult about novelist John X, any editor going to be less interested

in X's subsequent work? Is any reader going to avoid X's books? Of course not. A short, negative Geis review would damage X's career more than anything said about him personally, and even that damage would be negligible. Careers in the arts are not ruined by a little mild scandal and name-calling; if anything, they are advanced by it.

The real reason authors have recently threatened to sue you is that the larger SF readership, and higher remuneration, have inflated the vanity of some authors in the field. Kilgore Trout now sees himself as K. Trout, Ph.D., the insightful commentator on the technological future of humankind, and you'd better start treating him with commensurate respect, because he can now afford a court case to prove to everyone (including himself) how important he has become. This is the gist of it: legal action, not to defend a writer's livelihood, but to protect his over-inflated self-esteem. I don't think anyone has a right to such protection, and I despise those who need it.

Your magazine thrives on open debate, and you conduct it fairly. You have always allowed the right of printed reply, and you have never allowed statements you knew to be false. Under these circumstances it is pompous and cowardly for the John Xs in your readership to avoid confrontation in print and threaten legal recourse instead. It also damages freedom of the press, because they know you don't have the resources to fight a law suit, and so they feel able to bully you. The piece of mine that you recently chose not to publish, partly because of possible libel, will appear elsewhere, so I don't feel censored. But it is sad to see that SFR is now censored, because of vindictive threats from a tiny clique of nouveau-riche narcissists. I would name them, but I'm not allowed to under the new regime, right?

((Right, you statist running-dog tool of the fascist monsters of the impoverished classes.))

It all makes me wonder why NEW WORLDS has received no writs. True, our circulation is small and we are located inconveniently far from the West Coast of America, but we've certainly published worse personal attacks than you have (with every justification, I hasten to add). And I expect we'll continue to do so. Personally, I regard legal threats more as provocation to go further, than as a warning to back down. We'll see what happens when our next issue comes out, probably in October.'



CARD FROM ROBERT A BLOCH
2111 Sunset Crest Drive
Los Angeles, CA 90046
August 4, 1979

'Thanks again for an exceptionally fine issue! SFR is up to your usual high standards -- and that's very high indeed; I can tell, because when I read it my nose bleeds.

'But there's a horrifying edict on page 10 which I hope you'll reconsider. What's all this about "no more cheap shots"? In these times of dreadful inflation, those damned shots were just about the only cheap things we had left. Does this really mean I can no longer abuse, vilify, excoriate, slander, libel or otherwise accurately describe Wilson Tucker in your pages?

'Say it isn't so -- because if it is, what will become of your own dialogues with Alter?'

((Well...okay, let's make Bob Tucker official target for cheap shots and scurrilous attacks. He won't mind. He's used to it by now. Aren't you, Bob? Bob? BOB??))

LETTER FROM GEORGE WARREN
853 N. Hill
Pasadena, CA 91104
July 31, 1979

'I got a call from Larry Shaw saying Scott Peacock (Editor in the early 40s of PLANET STORIES and other Fiction House titles) had died July 7 in Los Angeles of cardiac arrest following lung surgery. He was 64.

'In his pulp days when his health was better, Scotty averaged over 1.3 million words sold annually -- while writing part time on his free time

after editing around six Fiction House pulps! When he became a regular at BLUE BOOK he quit to freelance and, with this as a cash base, plugged away until he had broken everyone of the biggest slick magazines -- POST, COLLIER'S, MC CALL'S, MC LEAN'S (of Toronto). In the late 40s he went west to write TV scripts for Hal Roach TV mill, churning out a mighty volume of "Cisco Kid" scripts and creating such series as "Sheena of the Jungle", "Benvenuto Cellini", and "Francisco Villain" (the latter series, an old BLUE BOOK standby, was an early TV vehicle for Errol Flynn).

'Blacklisted in TV in the 50s, he went back to editing for a string of men's magazines, but had returned to his first love -- the writing of SF -- in his last years, selling several SF shorts to no less a market than PLAYBOY. In conversations with me he looked back with affection on his days with PLANET, when he bought many now-classic stories by the likes of Leigh Brackett and Fredric Brown.'

((I never know how to respond to news of this type. We have another headstone in the cemetery. It's depressing. But thanks for the news and the background.))

MR. BONES,
WHAT'S THE WORST
3 YEARS OF AN
SF WRITER'S LIFE?
3RD GRADE,
OF COURSE



ALIEN THOUGHTS CONT. P. 15

AN INTERVIEW WITH CHARLES SHEFFIELD

Charles Sheffield burst upon the SF scene in early 1977. His first story appeared in *GALAXY* and since then, his work, both fiction and non-fiction, has been published in virtually every magazine in the field and in several original anthologies. He also writes a regular -- and often controversial -- column for *THRUST*. His first novel, *SIGHT OF PROTEUS*, (Ace, 1978) excited great interest, both within and outside the SF world -- eliciting a rave review from *PUBLISHER'S WEEKLY*. His second novel, *THE WEB BETWEEN THE WORLDS*, was published by Ace in August 1979, and his first story collection (also from Ace) is slated for November. He was nominated for the John W. Campbell award for best new writer in the field, presented at Seacon, '79.

This interview was conducted in Dr. Sheffield's snow-bound Bethesda, Maryland, home on 24 February 1979.

SFR: Why don't we begin with you telling us a bit about Charles Sheffield, your background, your academic training, your original interest in SF, and so on.

SHEFFIELD: I was born in England, raised in Yorkshire -- the East Riding of Yorkshire -- a town called Hull. I went to St. Johns College, Cambridge, as a State Scholar and a College Scholar, and I got a First Class Honors degree in mathematics -- in Britain that includes applied mathematics, which in this country would probably only be taught as physics courses -- mechanics, electromagnetism, elasticity, aerodynamics, quantum theory, etc. (So, in a sense, if you're a mathematician in England, you're likely to be much more of an applied mathematician than you would be here. And my tastes have always run that way, so I became a theoretical physicist. But I didn't really do anything different; my interests continued to be in mathematical applications.)

As I went further into the nuclear physics area, it became apparent to me that the problems I was trying to solve -- large-scale systems of integral equations -- could not be done analytically. It also became clear that the computer resources were far greater in this country than they were in England.

So I first came to this country in 1962 to use computers. In '63 I became involved in the space program, which was really getting off the ground back then, and this led me away from nuclear physics into numerical analysis for satellite geodesy. I got involved with NASA about '63, and then more with Lunar Orbiter in '65 and '66. I've stayed around the space program ever since. I was involved with the British Interplanetary Society long before that, back in Cambridge.

The big problem now for the space program is data analysis. There are huge volumes of data coming back from space -- but the hard thing is manipulating them. The things I do are designed to process them efficiently and extract information from them. That's what I do now, for Earth Satellite Corporation. I deal with anything that involves a tough theoretical problem -- particularly in image processing. I'm a vice-president and stockholder -- my official title is Vice-President and Special Projects Group Director, but that's too long for any human, so it's just easier to say I'm a vice-president.

SFR: You've told us about your scientific and technical background, but when did you first take an interest in SF? Whom did you first read? How did it relate to your scientific interests -- or did it?

SHEFFIELD: Well, I began to read it in the early fifties. I didn't begin to read a particular author. It's my impression that people who begin to read when they are young are not author-specific. They tend to prefer certain magazines, and much later begin to look at who's writing -- unless they really are fond of a series character, and then they identify first with the character and look for the guy who writes the series.

For example, Ron Hubbard writing as Rene Lafayette or some such name, was writing the Doc Methuselah stories. And I remember those and I remember looking for them. But, in general, I was not very aware of authors.

SFR: What magazines were you reading?

SHEFFIELD: I was reading *AMAZING*, *FANTASTIC*, *ASTOUNDING SF*, *GALAXY*.

I remember reading "Now You See It" in *ASF*, which was part of the Foundation Trilogy -- but not realizing because I wasn't tuned into authors, that it was part of a series. And I found it completely incomprehensible. I assumed that the clues as to what and where the Second Foundation were imbedded in the story. So I went through it ten times, trying to figure out why I couldn't understand the ending! And I did not know it was Asimov probably 'til oh, five or ten years later -- because I wasn't reading for the particular author but for the story. And I suspect that's still true of people who read between the ages of twelve and twenty.

SFR: So you were in your teens when you began to read SF?

SHEFFIELD: I'll give you a two-part answer. I began to read it when I was in my teens, and I kept on in a somewhat desultory and random fashion until around the middle sixties, when I stopped reading it completely. I didn't stop reading because I was aware of the fact that anything was changing. I just found that I didn't seem to have the interest in the field.



Conducted By Karl T. Pflock

I strongly suspect, looking back and looking at the correlation I can make with what was going on in science fiction, that I had encountered and been turned off by the New Wave. I didn't know anything about the New Wave until three years ago. I just got less interested.

I remained off science fiction until '73, when I was on my way to Iran. I was in London, and I was staying at someone's house, and I came across a copy of RINGWORLD. I read it. And I said, "Hey, you know, someone's actually writing good stuff! I thought that had stopped, that nobody was writing good stuff any more." So that's why Larry Niven, in a sense, bears the "blame" for me beginning to write science fiction. Because after that, I began to read it again. And I became aware of the fact that not everything was RINGWORLD. I found some awful stuff in print, and I thought, "God! This can get published. Surely I could write better than this. Even if I can't, I don't see how I could write worse stuff than this."

SFR: It seems to me that once upon a time, we were talking about how we had got started writing and you told me you had taken a crack at detective or mystery stories and that they were lousy. Were those your first attempts at fiction, or did you do other things before that, or were you writing these "in parallel" with SF, or did you make a transition?

SHEFFIELD: I didn't really make a transition. The first thing I tried to "write out" was a detective story idea. It was, as you say, lousy. Before that, I had only written inside my head.

SFR: Was this before you read RINGWORLD?

SHEFFIELD: No, it was after RINGWORLD. The stimulus to write had come from SF. The fact that I tried to do something that looked like a detective story was more or less an accident, or actually a parallel, because my detective stories invariably turn upon a scientific point.

For instance, one that was later published involved the four-color problem for map coloring. Conversely, when I write science fiction, there is often an element of detective story, a mystery, in it. I like to read both sorts, therefore, when I write, it often turns out that both are in there. But I don't think I tried to write detective stories and then switched. I really regard what I write as influenced by both sides.

I don't know if I mentioned this to you, but last year I wrote what I regarded as a science fiction story, and it was bought by ALFRED HITCHCOCK'S MYSTERY MAGAZINE (published in June, 1979). And another story which I consider SF will be used by Terry Carr in his best fantasy of the year volume. I don't draw the genre distinctions perhaps as tightly as some people do. I just consider them stories.

SFR: Could you tell us how you go about your writing -- your habits and the like?

SHEFFIELD: Certainly. My habit is to plot it, and then do nothing for a while. Then I write it in first draft, and again do nothing. And, finally, I write it up decently. The actual typing is a chore, and therefore, I put it off.

SFR: You have been rather prolific. You have turned out more stories in the past couple of years than many of the full-time writers. To what do you attribute this? You're very busy in your "real" work. Why is it that you write, and write so much?

SHEFFIELD: It's very simple. I write because I enjoy it. And if you enjoy something, you tend to do it a lot. It's if you don't enjoy it, if you think it's torture or hard work, that you develop blocks and can't write. If you really find it fun, then you write for pleasure. If I didn't find it fun, then since I don't have any economic incentive to write, since I don't need it to pay the rent, I'd stop. Like a shot.

On the other hand, if I write too much technical material during the day at work (and I write a lot of it), I cannot get the interest established to write at night. I don't know why. It suggests that there is a limit to the amount I can write per day, no matter what it is, fact or fiction. So I get very cramped on writing time, and that's why I always have a bunch of stories that are plotted but not yet written.

I don't consider that I write much, but apparently some other people write less. Because I very often have something I want to write but can't get written; I usually feel I'm not writing as much as I ought to.

SFR: There are some writers "who hate writing but enjoy having written". There are those who say they delight in playing around with the ideas, but when it comes to the do-

THUMBS WERE
EXTOLVED FOR
TWINDLING.



ing, fitting the ideas into a story, that's a drag. Where do you stand?

SHEFFIELD: Well, the material I write is really mind games, and that's the enjoyable piece. Nobody I know actually likes typing; I don't like typing. And I don't really like the writing out. But I like the conceptual process. And it's not really any different from the conceptual process in ordinary scientific work. It's the same, except that because you have less constraints, it can be more fun. You can take liberties with reality that you are obliged not to take in real science. But given that extra degree of freedom, you do the same sort of mind games and conceptual juggling. When you've done that, the rest is not very interesting -- for me. Which suggests I'll never be a stylist.

I've already accepted that. I don't think I'm blind to style, but I'm not interested in style. There's a difference. To me, a story that is stylistically superior but intellectually devoid of content is not worth reading. A story which has a lot of ideas but is badly written may be worth reading, but not as nice as it could be. The ideal story is one with great ideas expressed in a beautiful way. You find one of those in a good year. In other words, fancy work doesn't get very many brownie points from me as a reader. I like to read rather directly written stories because I like to look at the inside of the author's head. And the inside of his head is displayed by his thinking processes, and may be obscured by too much literary game-playing.

SFR: Whom do you like to read, both inside SF and outside? And which writers have influenced you in your work?

SHEFFIELD: Well, the field outside the SF field. The best writers, as writers, are not in the SF field. For instance, I consider Kipling to be unequalled as a short story writer. As you know from reading that letter to Arthur Clarke, my theory is that hard SF writers in particular have a tremendous admiration for Kipling. And Clarke wrote back that his admiration for Kipling (as a writer) is unbounded -- my view exactly. So Kipling is a very strong influence. But I don't imitate him; I wouldn't know how to. I don't know how he did what he did, in terms of structure and so on, but he's a very dangerous person to try to imitate. As is Harlan Ellison, by the way. There are many people who try to imitate Ellison and fall disastrously.

Another influence, not related in any way to science fiction, but someone who is just a superior wordsmith and storyteller, is P.G. Wodehouse. Wodehouse is not easily imitable either, although I have tried to imitate him. FFSF will publish the result sometime this year.

Within the field, I'm rather predictable. I like the hard SF writers. Of the past, such as Murray Leinster and Eric Frank Russell, and, of course, the still-living group of that generation -- Heinlein and -- a bit younger -- Clarke and Asimov, and -- younger yet -- Anderson. And then there's the new generation, which began for me with Niven and includes such people as Joe Haldeman, John Varley and Joan Vinge and -- although he's in a somewhat different group and has two different styles of writing -- Greg Benford. I think he is someone who has all the qualifications to be a hard science fiction writer, but who has decided that most of the satisfaction comes from blending that with literary forms -- and that's a very difficult thing to do. He's still experimenting.

Of course, he might disagree with me. I think that he has more potential than anybody else I know for that blending, because he has more of the science side and more of the interest in the writing side.

Those are the people I like reading or some of them. And, obviously, by looking at the people I've left out, I'm not much turned on by either inaccurate science or fantasy, though there are exceptions to the last. Then there are works I can't classify. You remember SOME OF YOUR BLOOD? Theodore Sturgeon?

SFR: Yes.

SHEFFIELD: I remember being given that in New York City and reading

it all night long -- enthralled by it. So there are exceptions. SOME OF YOUR BLOOD -- I don't know where it fits; it's just a superior work of fiction. It's even atypical Sturgeon.

SFR: Is there any particular author, in or out of the field, who has significantly influenced your work? I detect a strong "Nivenesque" feel -- especially in SIGHT OF PROTEUS. Others have suggested Cordwainer Smith.

SHEFFIELD: I think your feeling may have a bogus basis. The hero of SIGHT OF PROTEUS has the "same" name as one of Niven's heroes, though it's a cheating form: Behrooz -- which is a common Persian name -- Wolf. Abbreviated "Beh Wolf", and you've got, perhaps, Beowulf Shaeffer. But the whole point of the Niven "influence" is that I like to read him -- and anybody you like to

SFR: Could you fill us in a bit -- tell us how you found out about this extraordinary business, and so on?

SHEFFIELD: Well, the first time I realized that Clarke and I had written books with a very similar technological invention in them was when Steve Brown, who runs the Moonstone Book Cellar in Washington, said to me that Arthur Clarke had written this book with an Orbital Tower in it that sounded like my Beanstalk. Steve had read "Skystalk", a story of mine which I had brought to the writers' club, "The Vicious Circle", in Washington.

I said, "That's wild! I did not know anybody else had written a story on that". I had just sent the manuscript for THE WEB BETWEEN THE WORLDS off to Ace. Steve had a set of uncorrected galleys of Clarke's FOUNTAINS OF PARADISE, and I looked at this one evening at the writers'



read you will read, and consciously or unconsciously, you will pick up influences. But I made no conscious effort to emulate Niven, or anyone.

From a background point of view, you would expect many associations with Clarke, and I find that I have them. Clarke is British but has been for a number of years expatriate British -- as I am, I suppose -- and was science-educated, as I was -- he went to King's College, London, and took First Class Honors in math and physics. And he was chairman of the British Interplanetary Society, and I'm president of the American Astronautical Society ... And, as you know, we have just written two books with a series of strange coincidences between them beyond just the central device of the plot -- including the naming of the characters, the naming of subsidiary devices, and even some of the ways in which we avoid being specific on issues.

It was obvious that there was a lot of overlap. So I sent a copy of THE WEB BETWEEN THE WORLDS to Clarke, saying I had just looked at the FOUNTAINS OF PARADISE and was startled by it, and if he skimmed through my manuscript, I thought he'd see why.

He wrote back, and said he was fascinated but wasn't particularly surprised because, as he knew and I knew, the idea of the Beanstalk (as I call it), the Orbital Tower (as he and Pearson call it), or the Skyhook (as Isaac's et al. called it), had been around for a long time. And it was curious that no one had used it as a central idea in a story.

Clarke wrote to his English and American publishers and also to the SPWA BULLETIN pointing out that there were these strange coincidences. And I wrote to the BULLETIN and SFR, saying that there were additional coincidences, pointing out some further peculiarities of the

Beanstalk, and so on.

And then I sent Clarke my article that I wrote for DESTINIES, "How to Build a Beanstalk". And you just saw his letter that came to me yesterday, saying that he was giving a paper to the International Astronautical Federation in Munich in September, on Skyhooks or Orbital Towers or Beanstalks -- and he proposed to "plagiarize extensively" -- (his phrasing!) -- "with acknowledgments".

So the whole thing has been in the air. And the technical similarity is explainable. But less explainable, to me, is the fact that our central characters are both builders of the world's longest bridge. And he explicitly, and for no real reason introduces the nineteenth century English engineer Isambard Kingdom Brunel into his story. My chief engineer, Regulo, the old man in the story, is very much modeled on Brunel -- I had him in mind when I was writing. But there is no way anyone could have known that, because it is nowhere in the book -- it was only in my head.

It looks as if it is just a curious confluence of ideas and background which has led to books with similar ideas being written by the two of us.

SFR: Aren't there some other odd coincidences?

SHEFFIELD: Yeah. There is the curiosity of names. The hero of Clarke's book is called Morgan; the hero of mine is called Merlin. We both use a gadget called a Spider. We both use doped elements as construction materials.

But just the same, the books are still very different. As he said, "Yours is too melodramatic for my taste", and "has too many ideas" -- which he also said is a rare fault these days. His book is much cooler, more understated and philosophical in tone.

They're very different -- yet they do have this set of curious similarities. As I said in a letter to him, one of the reasons I didn't enjoy his book even more than I did was because every few pages I kept having to stop and say, "Now, he did it that way, and I did it this way". Or, "We both did it this way".

SFR: So just what is a Beanstalk -- or an Orbital Tower -- or a Skyhook? Take your pick.

SHEFFIELD: It's a long cable -- very long -- that extends upward from the Earth's equator for about 150,000 kilometers. The parts above geosynchronous height "feel" a net

outward force, from centrifugal accelerations, and the parts below geosynchronous height "feel" a net downward force, because there gravity force exceeds centrifugal forces. The two most just balance so the whole assembly can hang there in equilibrium. Before it can carry weights up and down, and serve as the load cable for a space-going elevator, you need to tether it at the bottom end and put a ballast weight out at the far end. The assembly rotates with the Earth, like a very long flagpole, except that all the forces on it are tensions, not compressions.

To build one, you need very strong and light material, and you need to do the construction from space. You could never build one by starting at the bottom and building upwards because the material would buckle -- you have to keep it in tension all the way. My guess is that we will build one within the next century, unless we have a war or do something else that makes all forecasts ridiculous.

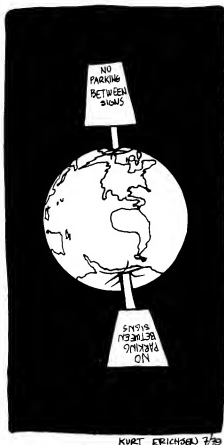
The whole point is that, once you have this thing in existence, you don't need reaction mass to get to orbit. You climb the cable, or send cargo or people back down the cable, and you use electrical energy with a linear synchronous motor to drive the materials up and down. There's no reaction mass involved, and you're not polluting the Earth's atmosphere with burning chemicals or with nuclear propellants or with anything else. You don't even need "extra" energy because equal masses going up and coming down energetically balance. The lift potential is huge, compared to any system of rockets you can think of.

So it's a nice idea, but building it involves practical problems. Clarke and I disagree about how we'd like to build it. I fly mine in from L-4, and swoop down to a tether point -- and that is a somewhat spectacular technique. He builds his by construction upwards and downwards simultaneously from geosynchronous height, which I don't like because it implies that there are real stable points in the gravitational field independent of distance from the Earth. That's not true; they're a function of distance. Which means as you build the cable, unless you've already tethered it by some method, the thing "drifts" up at 36,000 kilometers.

Clarke solved that problem by first flying down a thin cable; he bootstraps it. And that's a legitimate way of doing it. But my calculations on the bootstrap operation suggested that the stresses that

would develop in a thin cable would be intolerably large, unless you were to do a successive set of bootstrap operations. So I didn't go for that. But I should really go back and redo the calculations and see if they still come out that way.

SFR: I gather from our discussions over a period of many moons, that you weren't aware of the existence of science fiction fandom until after you had become a writer, that your introduction to fandom was just a couple of years ago at Disclave. What are your impressions of this hardcore of science fiction "fanatics"?



SHEFFIELD: You're quite right. My first story was published in April, 1977. And my first exposure to real fandom was in May of '77 when I went to Disclave.

When I began to write, I joined Science Fiction Writers of America, and I noticed that one of the officers was Tom Monteone, who is in the Washington area. I wrote him a letter, and said, "I'm interested in writing, but I don't know anything about it. Is there any group that gets together periodically in the Washington area, where I could

come along and talk about how you do it and where you sell the stuff? And he introduced me to Dave Bischoff and the rest of "The Vicious Circle", and most of them were long-time fans. And that's how I first learned that fandom existed. In fact, one of the first things they asked me was, "Have you published?" And I said, "Yes". And they said, "Fanzine or prozine?" I didn't know what they were talking about. I'm not sure I do even now, because I've been struggling to define professional.....

I clearly am not a science fiction professional; I'm an amateur, in all senses of the word. I'm an amateur because I like it -- which is what amateur means -- and because I get only a very small fraction of my livelihood from writing.

So in most fields, I would be considered an amateur. In science fiction, for some reason, I'm defined as a professional because I'm paid for what I write. But to me, a professional in a field is someone who earns his living doing it. And if I take that definition, about 90% of the people who write science fiction disappear.

SFR: You seem now to have jumped into fandom. You're writing a regular column for Doug Fratz' THRUST, and in the course of doing so, you have stirred up a bit of a controversy with Harlan Ellison, who is, quote, not a science fiction writer; I don't write that stuff, unquote. What prompts you to do this, in addition to writing your SF?

SHEFFIELD: I could say they're an outlet for the Mr. Hyde in me. They are that, but if you read the columns in THRUST, you'll also find that they're peculiar, in my opinion, for a fan magazine. Because each one is an attempt at an analytical process applied to some phase of science fiction. I'm appalled at what passes for logic in SF discussions.

The first column (after the Ellison open letter you mentioned) offered my definition of the easiest way to become a published science fiction author. That roused lots of controversy. I could say it works, but the only way I can show it works would be to say, "I do it like this and get published". But that's meaningless, a single instance that proves nothing. However it was an attempt at an analytical procedure applied to writers and writing.

The next one was a discussion of what I felt to be the main difference between "hard" science fiction and other science fiction. It included a discussion of the right

way to approach the writing process, in terms of selling.

The third one is an analytical discussion of a concept that seems to be unique to science fiction -- that the field is a ghetto. I have not given that one to Doug, so he doesn't yet know what he's getting. But what he'll get is, first, a discussion of the ghetto that separates the fan writer from the professional science fiction writer, which I attempt to dispose of and prove that it's an illusion. Second, the ghetto that separates the science fiction writer from the mainstream writer, which I attempt to prove is also an illusion. And third, the ghetto that separates the science fiction writer from the scientist, which I attempt to prove is not an illusion. It's real. Although people have successfully made the transition from practicing scientist to science fiction writer, no one has ever made a name for himself in science fiction and then gone on, on the strength of his science fiction ideas, to make the transition to acceptability in scientific circles.

It's a one-way membrane. You can pass from science to science fiction, and you don't suffer any problems. But you cannot gain acceptability trying to pass from science fiction to science.

So that is roughly what I do in THRUST. I can suggest ideas, or perspectives, that are still embryonic in me. I do it for fun. The whole Harlan Ellison thing was fun. I don't know if he thought it was, but I know it was for me. And, as I said earlier, if I didn't think writing was fun, I wouldn't do it. The THRUST columns are interesting and fairly logical, but they're still usually, a little tongue-in-cheek. For instance, I don't believe that anybody who wants to write has to do it the way I say to do it in THRUST. If somebody tries to do it the way I say, and fails miserably,

I'VE TAKEN THE MOST
IMPORTANT STEP IN
BECOMING A WRITER...

FROM THIS
DAY ON, NO
ONE SEES
MY EYES



that too proves nothing. Writers are individuals, and saying, "This is the right way to write it" is ridiculous. There's no royal road to science fiction writing any more than there is to geometry. There are as many ways as there are people. But I wrote about what I thought worked for me.

SFR: Okay, how do you write?

SHEFFIELD: In ordinary life, we are like an oyster. We sit there and idea particles float past us. There's a constant stream of them. And, depending on how many you catch, you can either write lots of science fiction or little of it.

The efficient oyster in the science fiction business is one to whom all the strange particles that come past represent nuclei for pearls for ideas, for stories. And I find I have many more of those than I can ever write. So the problem is to sort out the good ones from the indifferent, bizarre, poor ones, and then find time to do something with them.

The biggest constraint on me is the simple one of time. I write, I don't know, 10,000 words a month, but not more than that, because I don't have the time to do it -- the thinking time or the typing time, both of which are constraints.

So what I do is, I come across an idea I think is nice, and then the transition to a story idea is very quick. In other words, the idea almost comes with a story attached. So I find the conceptual side of writing rather easy. Writing it out is another matter.

Of course, the stories may be rotten, but that's for the judgment of the editor and the reader. It's not my problem. If I've got what I think is a nice idea, and I write it, and I like it, then whether or not it sells is a different question.

There are ideas all over the place. I think any science fiction writer will find more ideas around than he or she can ever write. The trick is, to combine the idea with a story that holds up as a story -- a process that I'm just beginning to learn. I'm still in a learning mode as a writer, and I'm strongly idea-oriented, which makes it harder to write well.

SFR: I recall listening to a discussion between you and Jack Halde- man at Disclave '78. You were talking about the matter of rewriting, polishing, etc. Jack was arguing in favor of such, and you were saying that you do little rewriting and polishing. You said that when you've gotten a story in "satisfac-

tory shape. you ship if off, wait for reader response, and take that into consideration when you sit down to work on future stories. Jack seemed a bit stunned, and said he thought the approach "unique".

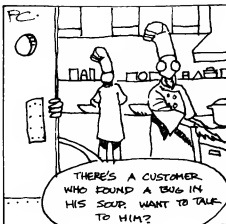
SHEFFIELD: I think my position not at all unique. What I said was, "Write it until you think it's reasonable and send it out". If you do anything else, you assume that you are smarter than the world of editors and the world of readers -- that you really have an infallible, perfect method of evaluating your own stories. I certainly know I don't have that now, and I very much suspect I never will.

In other words, the thing that is going to make me improve at writing is not rewriting ten times, it's incorporating into my story the meat of the comments made by editors, reviewers, and readers about my last story. I don't consider that useful criticism can be totally internally derived; outside review is absolutely essential.

One of Heinlein's laws is "Don't rewrite except to editorial request". It's as valid now as when he first said it. I quoted in *THRUST* the example of Fitzgerald, who translated the *RUBAIYAT* of Omar Khayyam at least four times. In the opinion of people who are specialists in such things, the first one is generally considered to be the best. And the point I made in *THRUST* was, if you write it ten times, and you send it out and it sells, how do you know that it wasn't better on the fourth iteration, or the third iteration, or the seventh iteration?

You have to rely on someone else's judgment to tell you when a story should be changed. There's a Kipling anecdote here. (I don't consider that what applies to Kipling must apply to me; I tell this only because it's interesting about Kipling.) Once, when Kipling had finished a story, he went to his father and said, "I've finished". And his father said, "Did you finish or did it finish?" And Kipling said, "It finished." Now that's all right for Kipling who was a genius; it's not all right for me. I never know whether I'm finished or not. The editors will tell me if it's utter rubbish and should be burned or whether it's great and should be published.

So I don't believe in numerous rewrites. I believe that, if you have limited time to write -- and I have very limited writing time -- the only way you get anything written is by writing it as best you can and then sending it out. Excessive polishing is a way of avoiding rejection slips; it's



an attempt to protect the fragile ego of the writer.

CONTINUED NEXT ISSUE

ALIEN THOUGHTS CONT. FROM P. 9

8-25-79 The United States Copyright Office has apparently decided to change its rules a bit. You may remember that I sent in a copyright form (with the \$10 deposit) with two copies of *CANNED MEAT*, and I attempted to use the form to copyright the text in my name and the three interior illustrations and cover art in the name of Bruce Conklin, the artist.

I got a call from one of the Copyright examiners and she said they were having enormous problems with the new forms: people couldn't understand the "employer for hire" terminology, tried to do things with the form not intended, etc. They were, she said, rethinking the whole structure of the new forms and the phrasing. She said I would have to make two applications of Copyright to cover the text of *CANNED MEAT* and the artwork. She said she'd send appropriate forms and a letter.

Time passed. And passed. Then, a few days ago, lo! the approved Certificate of Copyright I had sent in was mailed to me; dated, numbered and with embossed seal.

Bruce has copyright of his *CANNED MEAT* art in his own name.

So, with this precedent, maybe some of you other small press publishers can also copyright an artist's work in a book in his name, on the same form as the book's text. I need save some money.

The registration number for *CANNED MEAT* is TX 302-353, if you need to send along a reference #.

LETTER FROM JOHN T. SAPIENZA, JR.
2440 Virginia Avenue, N.W.
Apartment #D-203
Washington D.C. 20037
6 August 1979

'On your formula to return rights to authors/artists whose material you copyright in SFR, I wonder whether you have given away too much by your new language? You really don't want one-time use rights, since you also want the right to reprint old issues when they go out of print. This may require further thinking.

'I have an interest in this problem, myself, although I don't have a solution to it since I don't know much about copyright law, and I have had articles reprinted from fanzines in *DIFFERENT WORLDS*, a role-playing gaming magazine published by The Chaosium. They have a policy similar to yours about returning rights to authors, but haven't found any magic language for this, either.'

((I used to reprint the mimeographed editions of *THE ALIEN CRITIC*, but since turning to offset have made the initial printing large enough to avoid the necessity of a reprint edition. Too, my basement is getting too crowded with back issue boxes. More I don't need!))

9-5-79 WHEREEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE!
SFR won the Hugo!

"Down Geis, down! A man of your advancing years should be more sedate, more mature, more ho-hum about this."

Alter! how did you get in here?
"I have little teeny tiny tendrils wormed into--"

Shudder

"--every corner of your brain. I know everything that goes on in your life, Geis. All the incredibly venal, self-serving, malicious thoughts... All the sloppy mistakes, all the erotic--"

That's enough! Now I suppose you'll want to share the glory and congratulations for my having won the Best Fanzine Hugo, hah?

"Look, idiot, all the subscribers and the bookstore buyers...all the contributors...everyone knows I'm the spark, the added sauce, the flare of talent that makes SFR (and your writing) so much liked. OF COURSE I share the glory and praise! Without me, Geis, you'd be just another also-ran fanzine editor. And without me to zing appropriate words and phrases into your chocolate pudding frontal lobes you'd be a dull-as-dishwater writer of reviews, editorials, commentary



THE ALTER
EGO, MAC.
NOW LET
ME IN.

and fiction. You'd be nothing without me, Geis!"

Christ! Talk about me being egotistic! Alter---

"And I'm sick and tired of all these Hugo nominations being made in your name! I call for equal "pay" for equal work or talent! Fair play for Alter-Egos! I lust for recognition where it counts! I want my name on a Hugo! I want my name on the masthead! I want my tendrils to stroke the lush flesh of---

STOP RIGHT THERE, alien! There are limits! Now, back into the hind-brain where you belong! Back! Down! Begone! Abra-cadabra hutsut ralston on the rillerah.... (How does the rest of that exorcism go?)

"With a brawla brawla sewit, Geis. Don't bother. I'll withdraw. But I'll be back! We've got that reviewing job for GALAXY, remember? Anyway, all your caterwalling and carrying on makes my tendrils ache. See you, Clyde."

Is he gone? ... Yes! Now I can get on with the business of reporting and commenting on the Hugo winners as listed below.

but first a letter from David Pringle, Hugo Administrator for Season '79.

30th August 1979

'Dear Dick,

As you've probably heard by now from other sources, you won one Hugo and lost the other (full results and runners up on the enclosed sheet). Congratulations and commiserations.

Fred Pohl accepted your Hugo for best fanzine and then passed it on to a guy from Portland who promised to deliver it safely to you. He is John C. Andrews of 901 SW King Av., #401, Portland, OR 97205. I hope he gets it to you soon. He seemed trustworthy enough."

(Yes, Elton Elliott called with the news, and then Alexis Gilliland called, back from the con, with the

news. And John Andrews called to let me know he had The Precious Phallic Symbol, and quick as Paulette's Torino could get us there, I was knocking on his door. I thank him very much for the transporting of the Award. I did not ask how he explained it to the airport guards when its metal shaft set off the metal detectors....)

'I enclose a "Hugo loser's" certificate which states that you were also nominated for best fan writer (these certificates were a little idea of Pete Weston's).

'Best wishes,

David Pringle
(in his capacity as Hugo Administrator for Season, '79)'

(Yes, thank you again. The certificate is handsome, impressive, and an Award in itself. The letter from Fred Pohl below gives a more complete recounting of the Hugo's hands-changing at the award banquet. I had asked a prominent British fan to accept for me if I won, but he was apparently not there, forgot, or something. I told the Season Committee he was the one to accept, but maybe they forgot, too, or misplanned the information... Whatever, all's well.))

LETTER FROM FREDRIK POHL

29 August 1979

'As you probably know by now, you won the Best Fanzine Hugo at Season the other day. You may not know that I accepted the award for you. Charlie Brown, presenting, tried to get Bob Shaw to accept it, then Bob Silverberg, then called for volunteers, all with no luck, then he drafted me.

'Since I had no set speech prepared, I said what first came into my mind. Someone taped it, and I copied it down, and here it is:

"Geis recently reviewed a novel of mine by saying the last chapter made him want to throw up. Re-

turning good for evil, I would like to thank you for this award on behalf of a man whom I have always admired, although not very much. However, I must say that I enjoy the hell out of his magazine."

'Silverberg, next on the platform, got someone to take physical possession of the award and promise to deliver it to you in Oregon; I hope it has made its way to you by now.'

(Yes, thank you for the acceptance in my stead, and for the kind words. We're really in trouble, though, if there is ever a Hugo for Best Reviewer and I happen to win.))

Now on to the meat and potatoes.

1979 Results of the Hugo Awards, the John W. Campbell Award, and the Gandalf Awards.

Best Novel: 1064 votes

Winner: DREAMSNAKE by Vonda McIntyre.

2nd: THE WHITE DRAGON by Anne McCaffrey.

3rd: THE FADED SUN: KESRITH by C. J. Cherryh.

(Note: UTO THE WALLS OF THE WORLD by James Tiptree, Jr. was withdrawn by the author after the ballot forms had been sent out.)

Best Novella: 1012 votes

Winner: "The Persistence of Vision" by John Varley.

2nd: "Fireship" by Joan D. Vinge.

3rd: "The Watched" by Christopher Priest.

Best Novelle: 976 votes

Winner: "Hunter's Moon" by Paul Anderson.

2nd: "Mikal's Songbird" by Orson Scott Card.

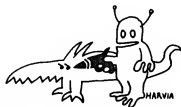
3rd: "The Man Who Had No Idea" by Thomas M. Disch.

Best Short Story: 978 votes

Winner: "Cassandra" by C.J. Cherryh.

2nd: "Count the Clock That Tells the Time" by Harlan Ellison.

3rd: "View From a Height" by Joan D. Vinge.



Where does Geis get off calling his Alter dialogues space wasters just because they have a high muzzle velocity?

Best Dramatic Presentation: 1079 v.
Winner: SUPERMAN.
2nd: HITCHHIKER'S GUIDE TO THE GALAXY.
3rd: WATERSHIP DOWN.

Best Professional Editor: 1052 votes
Winner: Ben Bova
2nd: Edward L. Ferman.
3rd: George Scithers.

Best Professional Artist: 989 votes
Winner: Vincent Di Fate.
2nd: Michael Whelan.
3rd: Boris Vallejo.

Best Fanzine: 848 votes
Winner: SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW (Richard E. Geis).
2nd: MAYA (Rob Jackson).
3rd: NO AWARD

Best Fan Writer: 848 votes
Winner: Bob Shaw.
2nd: Richard E. Geis.
3rd: NO AWARD

Best Fan Artist: 870 votes
Winner: Bill Rotsler.
2nd: Jim Barker.
3rd: Alexis Gilliland.

JOHN W. CAMPBELL AWARD FOR BEST NEW WRITER 892 votes
Winner: Stephen R. Donaldson.
2nd: James P. Hogan.
3rd: Elizabeth A. Lynn.

GANDALF AWARD FOR GRAND MASTER OF FANTASY 1059 votes
Winner: Ursula K. Le Guin.
2nd: Roger Zelazny.
3rd: Ray Bradbury.

GANDALF AWARD FOR BEST BOOK-LENGTH WORK OF FANTASY 945 votes
Winner: THE WHITE DRAGON by Anne McCaffrey.
2nd: THE COURTS OF CHAOS by Roger Zelazny.
3rd: SAINT CAMBER by Katherine Kurtz.

(Note: Michael Moorcock withdrew his name and his novel, GLORIANA, from consideration for the Gandalf Awards after the ballot forms had been printed.)

Assistance in the counting of the ballots for the Gandalf Awards was given by Mike Dickson, Kate Jeary, Simon Ounsly and Phil Stephenson-Payne. Special thanks to Adrian Smith for hank-making the oak award-plinths, and to Dave Langford for being generally invaluable.....

David Pringle.

TAKE ONE A DAY, AND
A HUGO IS QUARANGODDAMNED-
TEED.

THERE ARE A FEW
SIDE EFFECTS,
OF
COURSE.



REG COMMENT: I am very happy to have won another Hugo, of course. Science fiction and fandom been very, very good to me. I want to thank all those who nominated and voted for me---

"And Alter! Don't forget---"

---and who have helped me and SFR in many other ways. Science fiction and fandom been very, very good to me.

"I've been good to you, too, Geis, but you never thank me!"

I will ignore that strange voice. It doesn't exist. I want to thank---

"Glory hog! Where would you be without my intercession with the Devil? You made a stupid deal with him some years ago---your immortal soul in exchange for ten Hugo Awards ---and if it hadn't been for me stepping in and renegotiating the contract, you'd be serving endless time in The Pit right now!"

"Sigh* Alter, I would have been able to wriggle out of that contract by myself! All you did was sign me up for five more Hugos. Then I'm in the sulphuric soup!"

"He was about to yank you! I had to act fast or see my Host's body dead and his soul roasting on the fire. Don't give me that shit about---"

This arguing is embarrassing! Now shut up and let me get on with this!

"Yeah, yeah, any excuse to shut me up and put me off for a while longer. The time will come, Geis---" SHUT UP!

Grumble, grumble, grouse, grump

Now...oh, yes, the commentary. It strikes me that the novel sweep by women writers and the near-dominance in the other fiction categories suggests that the charge of male chauvinism in s-f and fandom

is a dead letter. In fact, if this keeps up there may soon be charges of a women's voting bloc. We'll see what happens in the awards the next few years.

I'm happy Bill Rotsler won another Hugo as Best Fan Artist; he's been a long time earning these.

One of these years Steve Fabian will win a justly deserved Hugo for Best Pro Artist, and Alexis Gilliland will get one for Best Fan Artist. I'll keep nominating them and voting for them.

CARD FROM MIKE GLICKSOHN
141 High Park Avenue
Toronto, Ont., M6P 2S3, Canada

"Just a postcard to thank you for the steady stream of superior magazines you are kind enough to keep sending my way with only an occasional slim XENIUM by way of response. I did want you to know that I read through every issue and while I may skim over some of the reviews and interviews, I always read your own comments and most of the letters."

#26 is another fine issue, the second installment of OIM being a highlight of the issue. And if your usual massive influence on the Hugo awards can be used to gain a statue for Alexis Gilliland -- whose work actually illuminates your magazine -- I know a lot of people who'd cheer rather loudly.

"One other thing: How did James McQuade, a fan I have never to my knowledge met, draw such an accurate picture of me on page 9? Can I sue for defamation of character or something? Once again, many thanks for SFR; it's one hell of a fine magazine."

(Hal Would that I did have massive influence on the Hugo voting. Alas, the patterns are beyond control; the voters are too individualistic, honest, opinionated, etc. to manipulate. That's what makes the Hugoes the best award.)

LETTER FROM SIMON GREEN July 8, 1979

'With regard to SFR #31, I'm sorry to hear you've gone back to quarterly, but glad to hear Al has made a come back. SFR without Alter would be like an egg without salt.

'I'm also glad to hear you're getting into more writing. In case you didn't know it, you've got quite a following over here in Britain, ever since ONE IMMORTAL MAN first appeared in ANDROMEDA 2. Copies of SFR containing the expanded version have been passing hands at quite exorbitant rates, I understand.

'Hopefully, now that SFR is going back to quarterly, we'll be seeing more GEIS in future, as of late your presence has come dangerously close to being swamped under the sheer mass of reviews by Various Others, news by Others Various, and letters by the barrel load. Dammit, Dick, it's your reviews and opinions that make SFR so fascinating, good though the others are.'

((That's interesting, about ONE IMMORTAL MAN. The issues it appeared in--SFR #26-27-28--are still available for US\$1.25 each, by mail, from here.

((OIM is beginning to gather an underground following. As to its overground attempts to find a front-line publisher... So far Berkeley, Ace, Dell, Dunning, and DAW have declined my offer to let them make me (and themselves) rich by publishing it in the USA. Not much feedback: one editor said it was pornographic, and another said it was too visceral. Next stop: Playboy Press.))

UPDATE 9-11-79-----

Hank Stine, editor of GALLAXY, called today to say he is putting together his fourth issue (since taking over as editor) and, when I asked if he needed another column of my (and Alter's) book reviews, said, yes, it would be a good idea to start writing it.



If I wrote sf porn,
I don't know how I
could face myself.

LETTER FROM RICK NORMWOOD Box 51576, Lafayette, LA, 70505 May 16, 1979

'A while back Ted White was fusing about ACE leaving the magazine publication credits off a book. This time they have left out something more important: an author's name. They list FOUR-DAY PLANET and LONE STAR PLANET as by H. Beam Piper, but the latter story is a re-titling of A PLANET FOR TEXANS by Piper and J.J. McGuire. McGuire's name does not appear anywhere on the recent reprint. Poor McGuire! Even THE SCIENCE FICTION AND HEROIC FANTASY AUTHOR INDEX, which lists McGuire under the H. Beam Piper listing, forgets to credit him in the co-author index. He also wrote CRISIS IN 2140 with Piper. Both are good stories.

'There is a precedent for this, I guess. When was the last time you saw A SKYLARK OF SPACE with Lee Hawkins Garby's name on it? It is one of the ills of our age: If you aren't famous, you don't exist.'

((Isn't it the truth? Of course "famous" is relative. Just the other day I got mad at a guy in a supermarket and shouted, "I'll report you to H. Beam Piper!" and he said, "Who?")

LETTER FROM NEAL WILGUS Box 25771 Albuquerque, NM 87125 August 16, 1979

'Anyone interested in working on that Masters thesis on the Conan linkage suggested in your response to Robert Hoskins' letter in SFR #32 (Page 31) would do well to track

down Conan, Lord of Miniadoc, who might have been a near-contemporary of King Arthur. At least that's what Thomas Bulfinch suggests in THE AGE OF CHIVALRY (Mentor paperback, Page 62, Chapter II, "The Mythical History of England"). According to Bulfinch, "The next event of note is the conquest and colonization of Armorica by Maximus, a Roman general, and Conan, Lord of Miniadoc, or Denbigh-land, in Wales."

'This Conan was probably a generation or two before Arthur, which would put him around A.D. 400 to 450 and five or six hundred years earlier than the nest Hoskins cites in his letter. Maybe it isn't a family tree -- maybe it's the immortal Conan...'

((If that's true it raises the question: where is Conan today? I'll answer: he's probably playing pro football under an assumed name.))

CARD FROM JEFF FRANE POB 2293, Berkeley, CA, 94702 23 August 1979

'I will probably continue to dislike Schweitzer's reviews, but at least ask him to get his facts straight on the books he's read. Kate Wilhelm's story "Moongate" (ORBIT 20) takes place in Eastern Oregon, not "the deserts of the southwestern U.S.", which Schweitzer says she describes so well.

'Now, if he'd really read the story, he'd know that, wouldn't he?'

LETTER FROM GENE WOLFE Box 69, Barrington, IL, 60010 August 18, 1979

'I have not by any means finished your #32, but I wanted to write you now to thank you for publishing Darrell Schweitzer's review of ORBIT 20 and to congratulate you on getting that Vic Kostrikin piece on page 16.

'I haven't felt that way since I used to read WEIRD TALES. Wonderful.'



HE HEARS....

Reviews By Steven E. McDonald

WAR OF THE WORLDS

By Jeff Wayne, et al
CBS/Columbia Records double album

What they do to Herbert George -- well, it's criminal.

Several years ago, one Rick Wakeman, late of the macrobiotic rock band, yes, came up with the idea of doing a full-blown production of Jules Verne's JOURNEY TO THE CENTER OF THE EARTH, writing for rock band, orchestra and chorus. The result, recorded live, was quite spectacular, and was a well-deserved success. Wakeman, encouraged by this, went on to do THE MYTHS AND LEGENDS OF KING ARTHUR AND THE KNIGHTS OF THE ROUND TABLE, which accentuated all his worst failings -- it was as overblown as the title was long. It was also a success.

Hence, WAR OF THE WORLDS. I'm not against concepts per se, even concepts based around well-known classic books. A great deal of classical music has been inspired by great works of literature, or well-known myths -- SCHEHERAZADE, for example, or Tschaiowsky's ROMEO AND JULIET. And the abovenoted rock production by Wakeman.

Unfortunately, a grandiose concept requires the ability to write grandiose music to suit the theme -- or, at least, the ability to fake it very well. Ask John Williams about STAR WARS.

Jeff Wayne, ne'er mind his legions of talent, doesn't have the ability to pull it off. From beginning to end, this entire expensive production, whose lyrics have little to do with WAR OF THE WORLDS, has all the impact of a wet piece of toast. Lots of weary synthesizers and nice voices and ... well, even disco is preferable to this turkey.

Strictly for fans of the LOGAN'S RUN TV series.

ONCE UPON A TIME

By Donna Summer
Casablanca double album

Cinderella meets Metropolis.

Once upon a time, there was electrofunk, and Donna Summer was the chief exponent: Seventeen minutes of orchestrated groaning over a steady four-four thump, hiding under the title of "Love to Love You, Baby". A minor event in music: Unfortunately only in the fact that after six or seven plays it got boring, and offbase in that it was missing only whips and chains: It sounded more like torture than orgasm. It was a great hit. 'Bryan

Ferry's "In Every Dreamhome a Heartache" had arrived: "I blew up your body ... but you blew my mind". Plastic, perfect and programmable: The perfect sex object of the science age, a modern Barbarella.

Several albums later, ONCE UPON A TIME, remarkable in the fact that producer and artist have somehow taken the Cinderella myth (fag-end turns into Princess) and fed it through the images of Metropolis and several other dystopias, succeeding remarkably well. As it stands, only the final side is really a let-down -- a return to straight romanticism, complete with lovey-dovey clichés (required, I suppose by the Cinderella section of the story). The opening side is entirely remarkable: Each track cuts directly into the next, with no slackening of pace, with several changes of tone; from out-and-out despair through horror (a surprisingly brilliant track called "Faster and Faster to Nowhere" that is chilling), through dream through to rebuke. The second side is almost entirely electronic, making use of several SF images in both music and lyrics. The third side is notable for two tracks: "Sweet Romance", which may or may not be the heroine discussing her sex life with a computer, and "Dance Into My Life", which unleashes all the electronics: All of the backing vocals are electronic, computer-voices, and taken in the correct mood, it comes out as a chilling display of what most modern discos are about -- in essence, a very subtle attack on the very format it uses.

A pretty worthy attempt at making something out of disco; given slightly more determination, it could have been something of a major classic. Casablanca, for all their involvement with Kiss and the sickly pyrotechnics of same, have been behind some interesting productions: Amongst the more notable being the maniacal productions of George Clinton, and his various friends (who make up the singular Parliament-Funkadelic-Bootsy's Rubber Band-Parlet-Brides of Funkenstein complexity which is beyond sane explanation: It's one band, you see, and nobody knows who's really in it and --) Unfortunately, the artist has gone after Diana Ross' territory; whether or not the production team (German, of course) involved will go on in this area, no one can predict; just hope.



AND THEN I SAW....

BY THE EDITOR

SCREAMS OF A WINTER NIGHT (PG)

is a cheapo, clumsy attempt at fright. It involves five couples staying a night in an old cabin in a "haunted" Louisiana forest. They tell each other terror stories (which are shown) and suffer the dumb scare jokes of their host. In the end the legendary spirit of the forest, resenting their intrusion, kills them with wind, fire and flying objects in the cabin, and a freeze-frame ending suggests the fleeing survivors are about to meet an even more terrible fate.

The acting, by unknowns, is pathetic to adequate.

It's a dumb movie. Don't see it under any circumstances.

BEYOND ATLANTIS (PG)

was made by the same production company (Dimension Pictures) as SCREAMS OF A WINTER NIGHT. Both are criminally bad movies, though SCREAMS might be classed as a misdemeanor. BEYOND ATLANTIS is a felony.

The film takes every known lost south-sea island tribe cliché, pearl diver cliché, ruthless fortune hunter cliché, beautiful white princess cliché, etc. etc. etc. and butches them to the point of sickening unintended humor.

The unknown tribe have goggle eyes and are supposed to be some kind of genetic mutations of Atlantis's survivors. Nothing is ever explained. The beautiful anthropologist never asks questions and aside from one thirty-second bit of speculation by her in a conversation with good-guy fortune-hunter Patrick Wayne, the subject is never bothered with again.

George Nader appears as the tribe's leader, a pure descendant of Atlantis, apparently. He is father to a beautiful blonde who speaks American and swims like a fish.

The underwater photography is nice. The girl's body is nice. Everything else is dumbfoundingly bad.

HALLOWEEN (R)

follows three high school girls as an escaped psycho killer stalks them on Halloween.

Donald Pleasance walks through his part as the killer's doctor/keeper who is hunting the young man.

A good deal of suspense is gen-

erated and contrived as night comes and the killer goes about his bloody business. In the end he is himself stabbed several times by one of the girls (the survivor) and takes five slugs from the doctor's big, heavy caliber revolver...yet seems to disappear after falling from a second floor window. The good doctor had repeated that "This is not a man." and so on. And apparently we are to conclude this "creature" is an instrument of the devil. Well.... The producers and director and script writer tried to touch one too many bases.

A fair horror film.

THE BROOD (R)

has a touch of class and innovation as well as good acting by Oliver Reed, Samantha Eggar and Art Hindle.

Reed is a psychiatrist treating Eggar with a new therapy---Psychoplasms---and as a result she gives birth through the ultimate in psychosomatics to a brood of small humanoid creatures who are driven by her intense hatred and controlled by her unconscious.

The movie has good pace, good structure, a fine climactic series of scenes which may revolt some and intrigue others: a "birth" scene is shown, for instance.

The film is rational and coherent if you accept the basic premise. There are no large insults to intelligence. Well worth seeing.

SUPERMAN

is preposterous, but it has saving graces. Christopher Reeves is incredibly handsome as Superman in costume, and wonderfully jerky as Clark Kent. He is a Find.

The film is uneven and not true to itself---if a typical (or even exceptional) male Kryptonite could stop and reverse time, exist in the molten innards of a planet, and exert God-knows-how-much power to reverse a gigantic earthquake, then there was no reason for the planet Krypton (in a distant galaxy?) to explode and for all its inhabitants to die.



Superman does all of the above fabulous feats on Earth in the climax of the film, to save Luscious Lois Lane. Margot Kidder, I think, was too much woman to play the part, was Gene Hackman as evil Lex Luthor was fine if ridiculous.

Glenn Ford is too big a name for the role of Pa Kent. He had to have been used for Name Value.

Marlon Brando as Superman's real father on Krypton played it straight and as well as he could, given the lines and the situations.

Krypton is intriguing but a nice place to visit only; too white and sterile and "cold".

I sensed and saw the movie couldn't decide whether to be funny/camp/comicbook, or a semi-serious s-f film. The "love scenes" with Superman and Lois Lane were nice, though. Whatthehell, see it, but don't pay top dollar.

CIRCLE OF IRON (R)

A Zen-infused and structured martial arts film, starring David Carradine (with Christopher Lee in a bit part). Beautifully filmed and expensive, it is set in a mythical Asian pre-gunpowder land of swords, personal combat and men who seek the legendary Zen master who can fight as no other man, and who is guardian of the book of ultimate knowledge.

An Aryan (who speaks a lot of slang American) is one such seeker. He meets Carradine (the Zen master) who appears first as a blind man and then as a warlord) in various tests of his manhood, fighting skills and dedication.

Actually, Christopher Lee plays the guardian, does no fighting, and is all too eager to palm off the guardian job to whomever he can. The book of ultimate knowledge is a Zen-sporer, too.

I enjoyed this movie. It's lovely to look at, exciting/interesting in the martial arts sequences, and intriguing and instructive in its Zen aspects. A fine meld.

THE MUPPET MOVIE (G)

is a delight as far as I'm concerned. Kermit the frog is the mild-mannered non-hero, the focal point, but Miss Piggy is the star. Gonzo, Rowlf, and Foxy Bear are a superb supporting trio.

There are many, many cameo bits by famous movie stars.

The movie follows Kermit as he is pursued by Charles Durning, the Col. Sanders of frog legs, who wants Kermit to do commercials for his fast frog leg emporiums, and then, having been refused, desires above all R-E-V-E-N-G-E for hurt pride.

The marvel is that this film makes the muppets human, and somehow we accept the fantasy as do all the humans in the movie accept them as human, but in odd animal caricature.

There is a great moral lesson there about tolerance and acceptance of people who are different.

But that isn't underlined in the movie.

There is so much chuckle humor, outrageous puns, japey, good-humored satire.... But above all it is the muppets being themselves.

Kermit & friends are journeying to Hollywood to be rich and famous. They, of course, finally make it.

The special effects are very good--you will halfway believe Kermit is riding a bicycle. That's enough.

See it if you have any child in you at all. It's a special fantasy world the muppets create, and it is wonderful to enter it and enjoy it.

DRACULA (R)

is an exceptionally interesting, absorbing movie. Frank Langella is a persuasive Dracula though at times he seemed too young and ordinary. But then came scenes where he showed 500-year old ruthlessness and contempt for mortals.

Laurence Olivier, when he arrived on scene as von Helsing, a murdered/vampirized girl's father, energized the picture with his intensity.

(Donald Pleasance had a good turn as a supporting actor--the father of Dracula's chosen "bride" and the head of a loony house.)

In this movie Dracula is given extraordinary mental and physical powers besides an ability to shape-change into a bat or a wolf in a fraction of a second.

Dracula's castle is the ultimate in dark, dank, loathsome evil in itself.

Flaws: there were too many humorous bits--comedy relief?--that to me undermined the reality of the Dracula story. Dracula's servant who liked to eat roaches and other bugs made the audience laugh too often. The humor destroyed mood and plausibility.

But, ah! the memorable scenes: The shipwreck caused by Dracula's fatal use of the crew during the voyage from Roumania to England...the downward creep on the face of a stone wall to his beautiful victim's window...his peering upside down into her window...the confrontation scenes between von Helsing and Dracula...especially the climactic battle in the hold of a ship as Dracula and his "bride" seek to escape England...the encounter with von Helsing's vampire daughter in the coal mine, and her final death at his hands....

Recommended.

PHANTASM (R)

delivers. The shocks and frights and horrors come thick and fast. The tension never stops (even if at times the gore and shocks provoke laughter) and begad, there is a small kernel of science fiction at the core of this sloppy-good movie.

The hero is a 13-year-old boy who, with his brother, investigate the strange goings-on at the local funeral parlor/mausoleum/cemetery. There is a tall, incredibly strong, indestructible, very Old man in charge of the place, there are human beasts three feet tall who used to be ordinary dead people, there is a pretty, busty woman who knifes men to death, there is a Gateway to another planet....and there is a flying globe with projecting knives flying through the corridors of the mausoleum. What happens when it hits a human head is gore incarnate--and provokes incredulous reflexive laughter (with appreciation for the ingenuity and attempt to please).

This is low class....but it has some good parts, some good aspects; the 13-year-old is nifty, gutsy and foul-mouthed; quite an accomplished kid. He's real.

There's a tricky ending that doesn't make coherent sense, but it finishes the movie with a good shock, so whatthehell.

The people who made this film, with a bit of extra thought and care could have made a superior horror movie; they settled for good-enough-for-the-slobs. So it goes.

THE AMITYVILLE HORROR (R)

is another B-movie horror effort by Samuel Z. Arkoff; a ripoff by Arkoff. Not that James Brolin (bearded, long-haired, menacing-eyed) and Margot Kidder (sexy and mature mother of three) and Rod Steiger (older, gray-haired, a priest) don't do their

best. In fact, Brolin did his best job of acting. But the movie played fast and loose with the book (which was supposed to be true-documentary) by adding events, warping and changing others, ignoring yet others...and with a terrible job of editing became incoherent, cliché-ridden (they could not resist the cheap-shot scare with a yowling black cat at the window!) and disappointing. It turned out to be another Satanist-residue-permeating-a-century-old-house, causing murders and terrifying manifestations.

It could have been as good as THE EXORCIST, but the decision-makers aimed too low. The film is worth seeing, but not as a single feature at \$3.50 or more per seat.

It would have been a better movie if they had left in at least some of what was obviously and clumsily cut.

PROPHECY (Pg)

is a well-made monster film based on the presumption that a mercury compound used long-term by a Maine lumber company to inhibit fungus growth on logs in their holding ponds will cause nervous disorders and mutations in animals of the forest when they eat the fish which have ingested this compound.

Enter a liberal, environmentalist doctor and his cellist wife who are there to write an environmental report for the Feds who are involved in an indian-white controversy over pollution and treaty rights.

The monster in this film is a giant, mutated bear or bears. Great killer slaving beast with ugly misshapen face.

The people all make Dumb Mistakes and most of the monster clichés are observed.

The interest and critical factor in these monster films is the quality and credibility of the ravaging creature. Not too shabby in this case, though its children seemed phony and robot-like.

TO THE POWERS OF
DARKNESS! EVERYTHING
WITH AN EXPOSURE
INDEX OF 6500
OR MORE!



The final hero-vs.-monster fight was ridiculous. The monster would have disemboweled the good doctor in a trice, not held him up gently to allow a fatal series of wounds with a hand-held arrow.

Yet...the movie was well-paced, held interest and the two hours passed very quickly. Both Robert Foxworth as the doctor, and Talia Shire as his musician wife (pregnant, fearful of Consequences because she ate some local fish) were adequate. The film didn't call for much real acting.

MOONRAKER (PG)

follows the 007 formula---lots of gimmick technology, macho-man heroics, a slight tongue in cheek approach... Roger Moore as James Bond is suave and solid, if a bit stolid and, frankly, a bit too old. The close-ups show a man in his mid-fifties.

Scads of minimally clothed girls, and a suitably evil, determined super-rich villain (did I detect a hint of Howard Hughes?) with a suitably incompetent set of murderous henchmen and an impressive set of lavish sets complete the cast.

Jaws is back to bite at Bond, and the formula destruction of the main base of the evil one (this time set in orbit) is front and center at the end. The laser battles in space and in the space base are pretty good.

But don't expect the plot or the characters' actions to make sense. It's a James Bond movie. These have deteriorated into ritual and self-mockery. Or maybe not: what's the difference between Pussy Galore and Holly Goodhead? Had MOONRAKER been made at the time of GOLDFINGER it would have been an even bigger hit than was GOLDFINGER. MOONRAKER, now, is just another good movie raking in respectable profits.

In sum: I enjoyed it for what it is---mindless gosh-wow adventure with a bit of sex.

UP FROM THE DEPTHS (R)

is a retarded, bastard son of JAWS. Set on a small Hawaiian island with a vacation resort. A primeval shark-type monster is disturbed by unusual tides and comes to the surface and the shallows and eats divers and swimmers.

Sam Bottoms is the only "name" actor but he cruises through the role of low-life con-man drifter with ease. The others are strictly Amateur Night, and the feeble comedy relief by the greedy, desperate hotel manager is pathetic.

So is the monster fish pathetic,

since all we see is his looming head full of teeth in murky water, roiling water, red dye in the water...

There is some salty language by a crusty, phoney boat captain, and a few brief topless scenes showing a supposed famous model doing a photo session for a magazine at the resort and in the water. Yeah, the monster munches her luscious breasts along with the rest of her. They deserved better.

The movie deserves oblivion. Don't bother with it, even if you can get in free.

THE SHAPE OF THINGS TO COME (PG)

came to Portland and made me see it because it is science fiction. It is shit. It makes Jack Palance, Carol Lynley, Barry Morse, John Ireland and little knowns Nicholas Campbell and Eddie Benton stink.

It is 10-year-old fodder, folks. You'll cringe if you see it and feel science-fictionally raped. H.G. Wells is spinning tonight.

STARCRASH (PG)

was the companion feature with SHAPE, and is a marvel of badness. It is so incredibly bad that it makes SHAPE seem good in comparison. You'll be astounded at the incredibilities, the blunders, the impossibilities. It is five-year-old fodder. And it had to be deliberate.

The loveable robot has more personality than any of the human characters, while somehow (he had to have done it for the money!) Christopher Plummer was able to impart some dignity and quality to his scenes and lines as Emperor.

Marjoe Gortner walked through his part and Janet Munro had only to wear the skimpy costumes. There were some "inside" s-f and old-movie references (the robot says, "Circuits, don't fail me now!). But overall this is the pits. Colorful, but a creature that should never have been made, and once made, never released.

If these two films are the children of STAR WARS, that great film should be sterilized.

BUCK ROGERS IN THE 25TH CENTURY (TV)

NBC is giving its sci-fi entry as good a build-up as it can, with two movie-length shows in a row at the beginning of the season.

The opener last week (Sept. 20) was flashy, derivative as hell of STAR WARS and BATTLESTAR GALACTICA, and with the usual dumb authority figures, dumb action plot, lovely women...

What saved it, perhaps marginally, was Gil Gerard as Buck, who is in his late thirties, tough minded, suspicious, cynical and competent.

The September 27th episode/movie is titled "Planet of the Slave Girls." ("Planet of the Slave Women" would have less sex appeal, I suppose.)

And it has some third rank movie and TV stars: Jack Palance, Roddy McDowall, MacDonald Carey...and Buster Crabbe!

We shall see it it blasts off or sputters on the pad.

SUSPERIA (R)

is loud, bizarre, grotesque, and at times surprising as it tells the story of a young American dancer caught up in murder and witchcraft in a dancing school in Germany.

It's a pretty good "B" horror/occult film. But don't expect it to make much sense. The R-rating is for the violence. Gruesome.

Joan Bennett has a small part as the head of the school and as a witch. How the famous have fallen.

I weary of the continual little-girls basis for all these horror films (and most occult and murder films-for-TV). It smacks of an unconscious male hatred for women that disturbs me.

AMERICATHON (PG)

An engaging satire of a near-future America bankrupt and making-do without oil. The opening sequences of people living in cars, using the L.A. freeways as walkways, joggerways, bikeways, etc. are good.

John Ritter plays a shallow, Jerry Brown-type President of the United States. The Americathon is his way of using TV to raise 200 billions of dollars to pay off the indian who threatens to forclose on the country. Then the Ayrbys buy the debt and try to sabotage the gigantic fund-raising event.

Predictable after the stage is set. Harvey Korman as the M.C. is guilty of third degree ham, and proves again he is lost without a strong comedy lead to play off of; he's a natural second banana.

It'll be on TV in a year.

TIME AFTER TIME (PG)

is a good, enjoyable sf film of small pretensions and a big advertising budget. It has plot holes and logic lapses and some strong virtues.

The idea that H.G. Wells himself invented a time machine and pursued

Jack the Ripper through time to 1979 San Francisco is incredible, of course, and so the story flaws, the unlikely coincidences, etc. have to be swallowed, too.

What makes the film an enjoyable two hours are Malcolm McDowell as Wells, and especially Mary Steenburgen as the young woman he falls in love with here. She is a Diane Keaton type, but less jangled, more at ease. I'll look for her in films.

There is good humor as Wells blunders and adjusts to our culture and technology.

David Warner as the Ripper is very good, very vicious.

The time machine is beautiful but unconvincing; still, what a conversation piece it would make in the livingroom!

THE VILLAIN (PG)

is a "real life" western version of the Roadrunner cartoons, with Kirk Douglas in the ever-frustrated-coyote's role as he does his damndest to kill the hero, steal the silver and ravish the luscious Ann-Margret. He is assisted by his horse, who is smarter than he is.

The three stand-outs in this movie are the horse and Ann-Margret's breasts.

The film is absurd, frothy, too long...but still fun if you don't expect too much.

OH GOD! (G)

is a mild, vaguely pleasant, chuckle film full of nice clichés about God and how we should learn to live in peace. John Denver is nice as the asst. supermarket manager chosen by God to remind people that He exists. George Burns says his lines okay and manages not to stumble or have a stroke. There is some satire and slashes at money-hungry phoney religious leaders.

This has been going around as a companion feature. It'll be on TV soon, maybe next year.

ALIEN THOUGHTS CONT. FROM P. 18

9-15-79 Hank Stine just called. He has the job of editing the Starblaze trade paperback line of Donning. He will continue to edit GALAXY, which is not (at its present bi-monthly schedule) a full time job.

Frank Kelly Preas, the former editor of the Starblaze line (with his wife Polly), may do covers and interiors as circumstances permit.

Thus there is an opportunity

for new artists at Starblaze. Hank mentioned that covers would be bought for from \$350 to \$800.

Manuscripts intended for GALAXY should be sent to GALAXY's New York offices [720 White Plains Road, Scarsdale, NY 10583] where Hank will come periodically to pick them up. He intends to move to the Norfolk, VA area.

Manuscripts for the Starblaze line of novels should be sent to The Donning Company/Publishers, Inc., 253 West Bute Street, Norfolk, VA 23510.

LETTER FROM PEARL August 28, 1979

I stopped writing because I thought I was dying, my blood sugar had escalated to 305 and according to the medical books, I was in serious trouble. As you know, I don't take insulin, the oral drugs are only marginally effective and since my caloric intake was about 800 calories a day, it hardly seemed worth the trouble to shave my food intake. What to do?

I gave imagery a shot. That's the treatment (?) where the patient adopts a friendly animal -- imaginary, of course -- to eat up his cancer cells or whatever. I opted for a bear to eat up my blood sugar and for reinforcement, even bought a Teddy Bear to sleep with. He was terribly cute but he didn't do his job so I stuck him away in a cupboard and waited to die.

During this period, I lost a couple of teeth due to gum infection (caused by high blood sugar), lost my libido (50% of diabetic females are "hypoerotic") and lost my friend Paul (killed in an auto accident at the age of 36). It was definitely Slough of Despond time but I got through it, gaining an acceptance

of the inevitability of death on an emotional as well as intellectual level. And seeing as how I seemed to be hanging on -- and not even feeling all that bad -- I decided to get on with the business of living. Part of the business of living is writing to you, Dick, although I know you are more cannibal than correspondent: I always picture you chewing through your mail, looking for juicy bits you can tear off and reprint in your magazine. Well, munch on this.....

I dropped off the temporary employment rolls in January of '78 and took a job with an all-male-homosexual firm, mfrs. & distr. of the infamous Locker Room (see enclosed). How broad was my education! No stranger to the gay scene, I was however uninformed in practical matters of gay life, i.e., how to bleach and treat the crotch of blue jeans so that the wearer's cock is outlined and spotlighted, where to buy a beaded cover for the Crisco can one keeps on one's nightstand for use as an anal lubricant, etc.

I also learned about Fist Fuckers of America, a group of masochists who love to have a whole hand shoved up their assholes and their manually dexterous counterparts who like to do the shoving. Concerned about infection, I asked, "But don't you have to make sure your hands are absolutely clean?" "Whatever for?" was the answer and of course, I felt like a fool.

Since all the magazines in our reception area depicted nude males, fully erect, fondling their members, or two nude males, fully erect, fondling each other's members, it was fun to watch the office machine reps. sit down and start to leaf through them but the cumulative effect of looking at hundreds of naked men (I leafed through them too) was on the down side. I felt like I'd rather never see another one and



while I still had a flutter of libido left, made elaborate plans to find someone who'd be content to pet to orgasm fully clothed. It's not an easy thing to find. I approached a couple of people with the proposal and although they seemed intrigued by the idea, nobody ever showed up.

'Finally, I'd had enough of homosexuals, nude men, pornography, jack-off machines, Bulger under-shorts, nipple piercers, ball stretchers and rubber socks and left to take a job with this very straight advertising agency. I am quite content. The level of intelligence here is the highest I have encountered in all my years of working and it's a comfort to be with bright people even though there's not a great deal of rowdy fun. But I can always look back on those Friday afternoons at Locker Room when we snorted from balloons filled with nitrous oxide while listening to the thump-thump of someone getting fucked against the Shipping Room door. It's possible that I've had enough rowdy fun to last me like forever.

'I'm looking for a place in Santa Monica'

'The gay population in West Hollywood has reached an alarming density ... I figure 88%. Santa Monica Blvd. is impassable. The sidewalks are clogged with half-dressed fags parading their stuff and the streets jammed with cars cruising along, looking for a particularly nice tidbit. 3 male hustlers on every corner, every one a teen-ager and, judging from their unhealthy appearance, junkies to a boy.

'To the north, I have Sunset Blvd. with 3 female prostitutes on every corner and a number of desperate looking men who can't tell the difference between bad girls and respectable ladies on their way to the bank. Everyone gets propositioned including middle-aged women shuffling along in hairnets and Hush Puppies.

'Then to the east, all around La Brea Ave., an authentic Mexican barrio is taking shape, complete with broken down cars and those skinny dogs they import from Tijuana. I figure they'll be full strength around November, at which time, the gang wars should start.

'I'm looking for a place in Santa Monica'

'I don't dwell on my blood sugar anymore. Although it was 338 when I saw the doctor last month, I'm waiting for symptoms before I get ready to go back to my former doctor and STARVATION. This trip, I know, will be a lot tougher than the 500 calories I maintained for

so many months. If I'm lucky, he will let me have about 354. Or, there's the possibility of a hospital stay with water and vitamin pills only.

'Now, I am getting depressed.'

LETTER FROM CHET TWAROG
2Lt, USAF
Galactic Citizen
1350 Macon St., #304
Aurora, CO 80010
6 August 1979

'Now, to burn my keys on one paragraph in SFR #32, page 4, second column, fifth whole paragraph (not the one-line) from the top. Sickening (I think ALTER should have taken care of that tidbit) to think that we have such mature known greats writing such demeaning counter-technology junk! I mean, to save you time to search the microfich: "This may come, mind you, but only after we so exhaust the mineral wealth of this planet that our mass production culture and society break down because of cost and lack of materials".

'Has Jerry Pournelle strangled you yet? NO! Well, here; strangle, strangle, aaagghhh! If we would put space manufacturing and industrialization out there within fifteen years, then we would not have to exhaust the Earth's mineral resources; pollute the damn air and water and land; and begin to become a mature civilization. There are enough asteroids and lunar material out there (ha, thought I would say "up". Wrong!) we could junk Earthly dredges soon thereafter. Use solar collectors to furnace blast that material in smelters for several centuries of metals and products from space manufacturing. You must have read Harry G. Stine's THE THIRD INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION?

"He stood on the mountain looking into the dark night sky. He knew that the time had come to save Earth from certain destruction from the crass muttering stupidity of the inward trodden masses. He became Chet Twarog!"

((From current trends it appears that if anyone gets out into space it will be the Russians, who are willing to make-do with not-quite-perfect vehicles and systems and don't mind losing a few people in the process.

((But I believe a viable, feasible, economically sound space future won't come about until either a huge breakthrough is made -- anti-gravity, fusion power, etc. -- or until a rich capitalist nation's super corporations see clearly a way to make billions out of the deal--initially by letting the people (govt.) pay for the huge start-up costs and later by looting the resources of the moon, asteroid belt, etc.

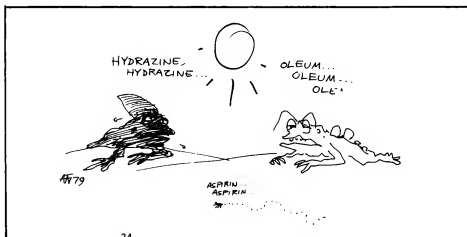
((I say again it is a race between the time-of-breakthrough and the increasing real costs of energy, ever-more-difficult-to-get Earth resources, and the reluctance of ever-poorer nations to finance (no matter what the prodding or crisis) the space program. We may have passed the time when it is politically and/or economically possible to mount and sustain such an incredibly costly effort.

((100 billion dollars for oil shale! Not one cent for pie-in-the-sky programs!) would be the current cry.

((You yearn for a new frontier. You'll probably get one--growing vegetables in your back yard and brewing gasohol for your two cylinder putt-putt.))

LETTER FROM BUZZ DIXON
7058 Hazeltine Avenue, #22
Van Nuys, CA 91405
August, 1979

'Your comments in regard to



localized power sources are intriguing, but I doubt they would be safer on the whole than the more centralized power we have now. There will always be someone, somewhere, who can do it cheaper by cutting corners. I'd think that lots of small, local power sources would be harder to oversee for safety reasons than a few large centralized operations.

I gape in amazement at the payment schedule GALAXY is offering to writers. Some people are going to get paid about \$12.50 a month for the next two years.

Frankly, this situation is ridiculous -- and it's a sign of the morbid attitudes plaguing most SF writers. I urge everyone to read Ellison's SPWA resignation speech again and again until what he's trying to say finally sinks home.

'Shit, Geis, a magazine like GALAXY that pays peanuts to begin with and then pays late (if at all!) is strictly amateurville! I write Saturday morning animation shows for a minimum of \$1250 for a script fifteen minutes or less long (that comes out to about 22 pages) and if I don't get paid within two weeks I raise a big, nasty stink. If a producer tried stifling writers out here the way GALAXY stifled its writers he would soon find himself permanently out of business. Ellison is right, the bulk of science fiction writers in this country are living in 1927 and Hugo Gernsback is still editor of AMAZING STORIES.

Your comments in regard to BOTTLESCAR: GALAXITIVE were most appropriate -- though at this stage of the game it's like beating a dead horse (maybe not -- Glen Larceny -- who "created" it) BS: GALL -- is producing BUCK ROGERS for this fall. He says he's learned his lesson and will not make each episode of BUCK a special effects test reel but try to have some decent stories. We shall see. NBC is committed to 12 shows -- if they pick it up for another 12 I may have a chance to sell a script to them). In particular I agree with your opinion that the show failed because it dare not offend. BBC-TV's DR. WHO does not have excessive violence or sex, in fact, the program is considered children's viewing in England. DR. WHO, unlike BORINGSHOW: GALACIAL, gives people Unsettling Thoughts. Since they don't have a big effects or set budget, BBC must dazzle with intellectual ideas, not models.

They also did a mini-series STAR MAIDENS, about a planet with a female-dominant society coming in contact with Earth that's probably the most intelligent and witty TV science fiction program since THE

PRISONER went off the air. The Japanese also put a little punch into their programs -- most Japanese TV shows give their characters failings and weaknesses as well as strengths, making them a hell of a lot more interesting than 90% of all American TV.'

((There are advantages to centralization and bigness, of course. Though cost-cutting and cutting corners isn't restricted to the small operation.

((It's a matter of philosophy; I prefer decentralization to the point of diminishing returns. This could get down to neighborhood power stations---or even, with the advent of super batteries---solar-powered homes. It's a matter of how much dependence upon others you are comfortable with, I guess. I prefer to be as self-reliant and as self-sufficient as relative costs allow))

LETTER FROM RONALD R. LAMBERT
2350 Virginia, Troy, MI, 48064
August 11, 1979

'Getting back to the Gor novels again -- one last time -- perhaps it was a bit presumptuous of me to try to lay down a "fundamental first rule of fiction". (I will wait a moment for the hooting to die down.) It is difficult to formulate universal laws that are really universal. Even physicists have trouble doing it.

'I was merely trying to define what was wrong with the later Gor novels. I maintain that the author lied about right and wrong when he eulogized the Gorian practice of kidnapping Earth women and enslaving them (this is especially apparent throughout SLAVE GIRL OF GOR).

'The mealy-mouthed agnostic rejoinders, "How can I know what right and wrong is" or "Whose idea of right and wrong", do not move me. I am not an agnostic. Civilization has come a long way (I mean in a spiritual sense, not just technologically) from the savagery of the past. This could not reasonably be the product of evolving customs, traditions, or relative social mores of themselves, unless our concept of morality were approaching closer and closer to some objective standard of right and wrong. Otherwise, why would they work? Why should they work well enough to bring us out of the Dark Ages and give us the degree of civilization which we enjoy? We may not have attained



utopia. But we are certainly better off than we were when we were barbarians. If right and wrong were really only relative, and morality meant no more than social customs, then this could not be so.

I can offer further evidence from history that there are objective moral laws operative in our world. In fact, history shows time and again that there are laws of cause and effect governing the affairs of men and nations, and these laws are obviously moral in nature.

'One particular example that fascinates me concerns the sinking of the Lusitania. Some people might fault me for using this example, because it is not universally agreed that Wilson and Churchill deliberately conspired to arrange for the sinking of the Lusitania to provide an incident that would provoke the isolationist-minded American public to support an American entry into the European tribal war called World War I. But there is considerable circumstantial evidence to this effect, and it is just the kind of "realistic" world politics politicians have always preached at us -- especially the likes of Nixon and Kissinger.

'This was obviously a grossly immoral act, if indeed the sinking of the Lusitania was arranged by President Wilson and British Lord of the Admiralty, Churchill. I ask you to consider the effects.

'First of all, bear in mind that U.S. entry into WWI was not necessary. Germany would have been defeated anyway, because it was the British development and use of the tank which broke the stalemate in the trenches. But because U.S. troops were there to swell the ranks of the Allies, Germany was beaten much more decisively than it would have been otherwise, so that the Allies could presume to impose upon Germany the humiliating and economically ruinous terms of the Treaty of Versailles.

'The Treaty of Versailles is credited by most historians with producing the political climate in Germany which made possible the rise of Adolph Hitler and his Nazis. The consequences of that, in turn, were World War II, death camps, and genocide.'

'But it does not stop there. The Kaiser, seeing the U.S. entry into WWI (April, 1917) was motivated to pull out all the stops and give aid to the communist radicals in Russia so that the Bolshevik Revolution (Nov. 1917) would take Russia out of the war. Had the U.S. not entered the war, the Kaiser might not have felt the need to lend support to the communists (whom he had no particular love for), and the Kerenski Republic might not have been overthrown. If not for the sinking of the Lusitania, Russia might still be a free and open society today. There would be no iron curtain, no cold war.'

'Such lines of cause and effect can be traced through all of history. Events do show such readily discernible patterns. And the only mechanism which could possibly bring such patterns about is the operation of laws that are moral in nature.'

((I'll buy cause and effect, action and reaction, in human affairs, but I'm damned if I can see any natural laws that are moral in nature---unless you mean the morality implicit in "To thine own self be true;" and the morality of recognizing the instinctual basis for basic human behavior and trying to live and advocate living within those somewhat elastic limits.

((Nobody wants to be murdered, cheated, or enslaved. Contrariwise, the human animal throughout his history seems to do little else than kill, cheat and enslave, in one guise or another, under one pretext or another.

((This dichotomy is at the heart and soul of the human predicament and the human struggle through life.

((It is expressed in religion, war, politics, every aspect of culture---including fiction.

((We are better off now than in our 'savage' past, but not because of moral law triumphing over immoral law. We are better off because science and technology have made it possible for us to exploit the mineral wealth of this planet. This wealth has provided luxury and surpluses which allow us to indulge in 'Good' works and charities and liberty and justice never before possible.

((When the surpluses shrink, when the wealth diminishes...then we'll be on the long road back to 'savagery' because we will no longer be able to afford certain moral luxuries. And "Right" and "Wrong" will

change to conform to that iron reality.

((Your only hope of "progress" in morality is in the fading possibility that humanity makes it out into space on a profit-making technology.))

LETTER FROM DARRELL SCHWEITZER
113 Deepdale Rd, Strafford, PA 19087

Sept. 16, 1979

'Some news: My first novel, THE WHITE ISLE, is going to be broken down into 2 novellas and run in FANTASTIC, probably April and July 1980. The structure of the book lends itself to this. The two halves really do stand up by themselves. Contrary to popular belief, FANTASTIC and AMAZING are still going concerns, and should not be ignored entirely. They aren't all reprint, and in fact, contain more new material than they did under any editor after Cele Goldsmith and before Ted White. I also find the new editor a good person to deal with. He's quick and courteous. I'm also going to be interviewing for AMAZING again.

'By a curious coincidence I've been reading Dr. Wertham's THE SEDUCTION OF THE INNOCENT, which I picked up for 35¢ as a curiosity. Most of it is complete bullshit. The good doctor would have us believe comic books are the direct cause for juvenile crime, all sorts of sexual oddities (there's a chapter called "I Want To Be A Sex Maniac!"), reading deficiencies, and even lowered IQ. He also tells us that Batman and Robin are gay, that Superman is a fascist, and so on. But even in this book there is a kernel of validity. (Wertham's problem being when he got hooked on an idea, he had no concept of when to stop.) Anything which lies about

basic human truths, which tells us that brutality is the way to solve problems and women exist only to be raped or killed, may be harmful, particularly in the hands of children who haven't had enough experience to know better.

'This brings us to Ronald Lambert's letter and the GOR series. I tend to side with Lambert. Dr. Wertham would doubtless claim that John Norman's enthusiastic espousal of perversion causes kiddies to grow up criminally insane (Did Richard Speck read GOR books?), but I can't help but feel that these books can do no good and may even do evil. This isn't a case of imagining what Batman and Robin may do in the Bat-cave off hours. Norman is explicit. He's the Billy Graham of sadism and bondage, a missionary out to convert the straight world.

'What about all those 14-year-old virgin boys who gobble up this crap? Boys frequently go through a stage just before puberty in which they are contemptuous of girls, thinking them only good for teasing and tormenting. Well, from his writings, John Norman seems to have never gotten beyond this stage. When a boy who doesn't know much about sex or love encounters GOR, he may be knocked right back. It certainly won't help him mature. My feeling is that a book should add something positive to the reader's life. At the very least, if it is simple-minded entertainment, it adds nothing at all. The GOR books can add something negative. But apparently Norman doesn't feel any responsibility toward his audience.

'Suppose he were telling lies about other human truths? What if he said that Black people like picking cotton and singing for Massa, and if a white man rapes a black woman, that's fine because secretly she feels uplifted? What would you



any then? Or what about a book which says Jews are greedy and heartless and gas chambers might not be a bad idea after all? What if it were written well enough to convince the ignorant? Would you find it conscionable to publish such a work or to fail to condemn someone else for having done so?

'Another subject: I think you should drop the book listings and use that space for letters, your own writing, reviews, articles, cartoons or anything else. I don't see why it's necessary or even useful for this magazine to list every book being published. LOCUS does that already, and it's more the function of a news magazine. Such a list is only good for reference, and only good for that when alphabetized, as the LOCUS list is, so in SFR I think it's a waste of space. Why not put it up to a reader vote and see how many want this feature continued?'

((I can't believe you believe what you've written! Fiction is inherently full of lies! The function of fiction is to lie! The "happy ending" dictum in all commercial formula fiction is a lie. The basic structure for 99% of published fiction is a lie.

((Why, for Christ's sake, do you think people read and watch and listen to fiction? THEY WANT LIES! And the better told, the more convincing, the better! From the range of fiction (lies!) available in the marketplace people pick and choose which they want to pay for, which lies suit them, which they need, which "entertain" them best.

((You are parroting the basic arguments of the censor, and like the censor you assume that the hypothetical 14-year-old boy is a clean, unmarked mind, a tabula rasa, a vacuum, who is totally unaware of the nature of fiction and its uses and its function.

((But that 14-year-old has spent at least ten years watching the lies of TV commercials and programming, has spent eight years reading the lies of newspapers, magazines, history books, school.... and spent twelve years listening to the lies of his parents and relatives and friends.

((Any 14-year-old who can read well enough to understand the Gor books is wise and hip enough to not be "seduced" by the obsessive psychosexual Gor worldview unless he is predisposed, warped, wanting, in need of that particular kind of fantasy.

((And, just as most people "buy" the lie of the happy ending in fiction but don't expect it in real life, so too with the content of their fiction reading/watching.

((Fiction satisfies a need for diversion, fantasy, lying, illusion, escape. Fiction does not create that need in man.

((Society has always proscribed (censored) certain kinds of fantasy (fiction, lies). As times change and as society changes, so do the proscribed lies change. (But there will always be an underground market for it!)

((Congratulations on your novel sale. Your comments on the book lists are typical of many others, and as noted elsewhere, I yield.))



LETTER FROM NOREASCON TWO NEWS RELEASE #9

Box 46, MIT Branch Post Office
Cambridge, MA 02139
September 27, 1979

'SPECIAL HUGO CATEGORY: The WSFS Constitution (Article II, Section 14) gives the committee the right "under exceptional circumstances" to include a Special Hugo Category on the ballot, administered in the same manner as the permanent categories. The Noreascon Two Committee has decided to have such a category, for "Best Non-Fiction Book" of 1979. The committee was moved by the consideration that such books are growing in number and quality, but are ignored by the existing structure of the awards. The time seems right to present such awards in 1980, and the committee will be very interested in the response of the convention members (and fandom at large) to the category. Eligible are works of criticism, history, bibliography, art and the like, provided that they are book length and relate to SF or fantasy. The formal description of the category will be included with the nomination ballot.

'HUGO AWARD NOMINATIONS: The Hugo Nominations ballots will be distributed with Progress Report #3, scheduled for mailing December 1, 1979, and also with these News Releases in December.'

LETTER FROM DAVID CARTER 2840 P Street, #3 Lincoln, NE 68503 Sept. 1979

'I am a member of a mutual aid club for aspiring artists and SF writers. We are looking for new members and would appreciate your help.

'We are conducting a mail order writers workshop with few membership requirements and no dues. We trade

market data and data on books on SF, writing and science. We also trade manuscripts for critical analysis by other members. Perhaps most important, we encourage each other since most writers fail due to discouragement rather than lack of talent.

'We hope to produce the SF pros of the 80s and equal the Futurian Society in developing talent. We invite any future serious SF writer or artist to join us.'

9-23-79 POLICY CHANGE #580241-B

OR
Alright already! I give up! I won't continue any version of the Archives---the recording of books and magazines received. A lot of you have voted with pen and pencil and typer to the effect that you'd rather have more of anything else than book lists. Especially, you'd rather have more Geis.

"Geis is in short supply. How about more Alter?"

How about a shorter Alter? About ten tendrils shorter? Hah?

"Forget I intruded, Geis. You were saying?"

I was saying that the subscribers' want this magazine to be reviews-commentary-discussion primarily. For new book lists they can go to LOCUS which does a complete and admirable job (among others) of recording and reporting on the s-f and fantasy fields in all media.

I still feel that lurking guilt inherent in all these books and things which sit, mutely appealing for at least acknowledgement, on every flat surface available (except my head). But I will have to bear it. And try to review more of them.

So be it and so it goes.

A WRITER'S NATURAL ENEMY: EDITORS

Editors are one of the three most important things in the world, judging from the conversations one overhears in the SPWA suite at any large convention. For some reason, fans always seem to have very weird ideas about what writers talk about when they get together. The more naive neofans often entertain the belief that writers talk about writing -- about their own work, or the state of the art in science fiction, or literature in general, or what their colleagues are doing, or fine points about style and plot and characterization. Actually, I've never heard any writers talk about any of these things -- except in the formal confines of a workshop, or when cornered by a rabid neofan at a convention. I've known many writers who would walk a mile to avoid a conversation about writing.

writer friends about all these things, too, and the writer frequently gives a good imitation of a person holding up his end of the conversation, and even feigns a certain amount of interest. And that's how the fannish misconception arises that writers are as intelligent and aware and eclectic as fans.

Nothing could be further from the truth. It is only when one penetrates into the sanctum sanctorum of SPWA suites, and sees writers as they really are when there are no fans or readers around to impress, that you comprehend our true natures.

Left to their own devices, writers talk about only three things; the three most important things in the world.

They talk about money, they talk about sex and they talk about editors.

ers are, and it's all because of editors. If it weren't for editors, writers would never drink.

Watch the next time you're at a convention. The minute an editor meets a writer, he will offer to buy him a drink on his expense account. Sometimes he will even buy him a meal. It's a sinister play. Writers soon become dependent on those editorial expense accounts, and then the editor will back off and threaten to deny the writer those drinks and those meals, and the writer will do anything to get back in the editor's good graces. Anything. It's a disgusting spectacle.

Also, this is one way editors keep down the population of writers. A fat, drunken writer is a supremely revolting creature, and seldom gets any sex, so there is no possibility of the world filling up with little writers.

Editors not only interfere with a writer's sex life, but they also like to deny him money. Oh, they give a writer a little bit of money every now and then, but that's only for the sake of appearances. They know better than to give the writer too much. A writer who gets a lot of money soon begins to feel secure and happy, and may even begin to raise a family, and editors don't want that. You can test this yourself, if you've written a story or

By GEORGE R. R. MARTIN

Naturally the more sophisticated fans, the ones who have been around fandom long enough, who have known and loved a writer or two, and may-be even been lucky enough to be permitted to buy a writer a drink -- you know how selective writers are about who they'll allow to buy drinks for them -- those fans know that writers never talk about writing. But writers have their own misconception. Fans are a very eclectic group, a little bit interested in anything. Wander around the next con you go to and eavesdrop on some of the conversations -- the variety will amaze you. Fans talk about music, all kinds of music, from classical to country. They talk about politics, and world affairs, and contemporary crises and controversies. They talk about sports, not just the football-baseball-basketball trinity so beloved of mundanes, but also more esoteric pastimes like hot-air ballooning and scuba diving and spelunking. They talk about books. Every once in a while they even talk about science fiction books. They talk about science, about black holes and nuclear fusion and the future of warfare and the cybernetic revolution. They talk about fandom, of course, and they plot and politick and gossip, and it's all great fun.

Money and sex are things that most writers want and never get enough of. Editors are things that most writers don't want and get all too much of. I've often heard writers ask other writers why there have to be editors in the world.

As it happens, I know the answer. If there were no editors in the world, writers would be very happy. They would frolic and play, and publish every word they wrote, and they would have lots of money and lots of sex, since they would be very famous and very charming, having never experienced rejection. Their egos would fill up the world, their books would be everywhere, and they would mate furiously and produce lots of little writers, who would no doubt write lots of little books. This would never do. It would unbalance the ecology. So editors were put into the world to keep down the writer population, you see.

Editors crush fledgling writers in their nests with heavy rejection slips, and they clip the wings of more experienced writers and tell them in which direction to fly -- usually the wrong direction -- and generally bruise their egos often enough so writers grow bitter and disillusioned and turn to drink. You all know what alcoholics writ-

These same fans talk to their



two. It's always easy to find an editor who will buy you lunch when you travel to New York. But try calling one up and asking for a six-figure advance. Even a small six-figure advance . . .

Editors are difficult.

I actually can't be too hard on editors. Sometimes I'm an editor myself. Only in a very minor way, though -- I edit my NEW VOICES series of original anthologies for Jove. Two volumes are out, a third was just delivered and will be forthcoming some time in late 1979 or early 1980. The NEW VOICES volumes feature stories by the finalists for the John W. Campbell Award, voted annually by the fans for the best new writer in the field. I arranged it that way deliberately. Not being very experienced as an editor, I figured I could only prey on the youngest and most naive writers. I'm learning, though. Already I've rejected several stories, and I've forced some of my contributors to do rewrites, and I've sat on their manuscripts for months at a time and ignored their query letters. I've even learned how to owe them money and make endless excuses about it. You ought to hear me apologize and justify. I'll make a good editor yet.

Or at least a tolerable one. I must admit that there is simply too much of the writer in me to descend to the real depths of which editors are capable. I've edited three volumes of NEW VOICES, and I hope to edit more, but I'm proud to say that I've never bought any of my contributors a drink.

Believe it or not, I do have some serious things to say about editors.

Not that all that went before was frivolous. Some of it was quite true. Writers do indeed talk about only three things, the three I've named. And editors can indeed be a source of frustration and anguish in a writer's life. In most cases, that is not due to any active malice on the part of the editor. Often as not, the real villain of the piece is the publisher, but editors are the hatchet men, out there on the front line, and they are the ones who are forced to deliver the bad news and bear the accompanying karmic weight.

Editors also are the source of most rejections, and writers hate rejections. Often, when rejecting manuscripts, editors say foolish things. This is not, I think, because all editors are fools. Only some editors are fools, though all of them say foolish things, much more often and much more foolishly

than do writers, or plumbers, or insurance salesmen. It's a part of the job.

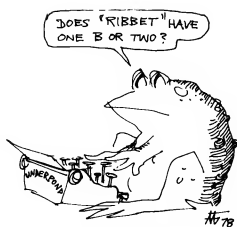
From time to time, I write reviews. Now, I read a lot of books. I review only a few of them. The ones I review are the ones about which I think I have something intelligent to say. The rest -- well, some of them I like, and some of them I don't, and often as not I'm not sure why. If you pressed me about one, I might give you an answer, but as like as not it would be foolish.

That's the situation a good editor is in. A bad editor never looks like a moron, since he or she can just send back everything with form rejection slips, and thus pose as a font of wisdom. But a good editor often feels a compulsion to say something when rejecting a manuscript by a professional writer. Say enough somethings and sooner or later they'll come back to haunt you.

I remember back when I was first starting to sell stories regularly, there was an editor in the field named Robert Hoskins. He was the editor of Lancer Books, who have since gone bankrupt, and of the INFINITY series of original anthologies, now defunct, and for a period I kept sending him stories in an effort to break into INFINITY. I did so for reasons that now escape me. I think it was because a young writer I knew had sold something to INFINITY, and I liked to think of myself as a better writer than this other fellow, so I thought it would be easy to sell to Hoskins. There were lots of markets around that had much more pretige than INFINITY, and paid better too, but I wanted quick sales. That's the way writers think. Is it any wonder editors can keep our ranks thin?

Anyway, I sent Hoskins this story called "The Second Kind of Loneliness", which I thought was the best thing I had written up to then. He sent it back, and said, "Sorry -- I've been there before. Many times". That story went on to sell to ANALOG, and it became a cover story, and has been anthologized several times. But Hoskins didn't like it.

So I sent him another story, quickly, and that one came back too. He liked it even less, called it a "travelogue". So I had to tell that one to ANALOG too, for something like twice what Hoskins would have paid me. It went on to become a Hugo and Nebula finalist, and almost won both, and it's been reprinted so many times since that I have trouble keeping up with it.



The title was "With Morning Comes Mistfall".

Of course, at the time I didn't know any of this was going to happen. All I knew was that this Hoskins fellow had rejected the two best stories I had ever written. I decided to change tactics; I sent him what I felt was one of my weaker stories, a piece called "Dark, Dark were the Tunnels". It almost worked. He wrote back and told me that if he were editing a monthly magazine, he would buy my story. As "a space filler". It so happened that I knew that he was not editing a monthly magazine. He knew it too, and he reminded me that INFINITY was an anthology, and my story was not good enough for that, since he had no space that wanted filling.

(As a footnote, I might mention that posterity confirmed my assessment of "Dark, Dark were the Tunnels": While "Mistfall" and "Loneliness" sold to ANALOG, it sold only to VERTEX, and has never been reprinted except in German. Does that count?)

By this time, Editor Hoskins was well on his way to ruining my health and disposition. He hadn't sent me any money, and I was getting precious little sex. I became determined to sell to him. I sent him another story. It came back with a form rejection slip. I sent him yet another. It returned with a short, polite note that said it was "eloquent!", but not a story.

Finally I sent him a novelette I had written called "Night of the Vampyres". That was my John Brunner story; set in 1987, in a United States on the verge of revolution, rife with racial and political hatreds, plots and counterplots, polarizing as the Weimar Republic had in the Thirties and about to enter a new Dark Age. I thought that was a very heavy story.

Hoskins returned it almost sadly, with a long letter. He said it was a "simplistic switch" on a

"perfect formula Western" and likened my hero to a drifter and my manipulative Nixonian president to a cattle rustler. "You have a facile way with words", he said in summation. "As yet, you haven't convinced me that your words will strike sparks with readers!". He mumbled over the missing ingredient in my work, and finally suggested that I try writing Gothics.

I never sold to INFINITY.

I never wrote Gothics, either, disregarding what may have been perfectly good advice. Who knows, had I done otherwise today I might be Georgette Martin, beloved of Harlequin readers from coast to coast.

I do have a serious message about editors, really I do. But before I get into that, I can't resist one last editorial joke.

Roger Elwood.

Seriously now, editors are important people.

They do say a lot of foolish things. So do we all. They make some wonderful grand mistakes. So do we all. There are many bad editors, who seem to understand little or nothing about the genre in which they purport to be working. There are far more bad writers, but I'm not going to pursue that point. I'll talk about bad editors and leave it to the editors to discuss bad writers.

Editors can be bad for a variety of reasons.

The worst are those who don't care; time-servers in huge publishing conglomerates, more often than not they have little knowledge and less affection for SF. They would just as soon edit mysteries, or gardening books, or porn; it's all a job to them. They buy books and publish them, or they reject books, but they do not get involved. It can be said that this type of editor has a virtue -- he changes nothing, does not seek to interfere, never distorts a writer's vision or gets between author and audience. This admirable restraint, however, has its roots not in any kind of respect for the writer and his work, but rather in a kind of indifference towards creator and reader both. Fortunately, such editors are rare.

Much more common is the species of editor equipped with all too much enthusiasm, and all too little knowledge. This type has a lot of heart, and no sense. The best of them are full of nonsensical suggestions that distort everything the writer was trying to do, but they have the good grace of allowing the author to talk them out of it. The worst of them insist. Or -- horror of horrors -- make the change

without bothering to inform the writer.

Then there are the editors who suffer from Maxwell Perkins syndrome. Perkins was a genius. Alas, the editorial legions who march in his footsteps lack his mental firepower. They carry only a firm determination to "work on" every book they publish, whether it needs it or not and to transform it into great literature. This is particularly difficult when they must edit the latest Gonad the Barbarian epic.

In SF, we also have their opposite numbers; the genre editors who have been working in the field for forty years, doing things their way, and who are bound and determined that these new writers will do things that way too. There are nine-and-twenty ways of constructing tribal lays, but only Doc Smith's is right. These editors also expect writers to be perfectly happy with minuscule little advances. After all, they got the same size advance back in 1949, and they were delighted with it. As for all the money being paid by other publishers, they don't know what they're doing and it's going to bust soon and there was a boom in the early 50s too, or didn't you know?

Yes, there are a lot of ways for editors to go wrong.

Fortunately, a surprising number of them go right. It never ceases to amaze me. What is a good editor like? A good editor offers you decent advances, and goes to bat with his publisher to make sure your book gets promoted, and returns your phone calls, and answers your letters. A good editor does work with his writers on their books. But only if the books need work. A good editor tries to figure out what the writer was trying to do, and helps him or her do it better, rather than trying to change the book into something else entirely. A good editor doesn't insist, or make changes without permission. Ultimately a writer lives or dies by his words, and he must always have the last word if his work is to retain its integrity.

There are a lot of good editors in science fiction.

I wish they could get more recognition, and that's the point of this whole thing.

The magazine editors have a tough job, but an important one. The magazines aren't as central as they used to be, but they are still the place the new talent comes from. The magazine editors have to find and develop that talent, fill out a magazine month after month, give it a distinctive, lively personality --

they do a lot. But at least they get some recognition for it. We know who the magazine editors are; they get nominated year after year for the "Best Editor" Hugo. Fair enough, except that sometimes it seems they all get nominated, good and bad and indifferent.

Then there are the anthology editors. Frankly, they aren't as important as the magazine editors. They find some new talent of their own, to be sure. But very little, compared to the magazine editors. After all, they buy only a relative handful of stories, and they work almost at leisure, piecing together one or two "issues" a year instead of six or twelve. For a while it looked as though anthologies were going to displace magazines, but that was an illusion. It was the anthologies that vanished. Look around you. Anthology editors get some recognition. Terry Carr, one of the very best of them is a perennial Hugo contender. Robert Silverberg has also been nominated, and I'm sure Harlan Ellison will make the ballot as soon as the world gets its hands on THE LAST DANGEROUS VISIONS. The bad anthology editors never did get nominated, though, and that pleases me.

Lastly, we have the book editors

They are the invisible people, and that's a dreadfully ironic situation, because they are the most important editors of all. Once it was the age of the magazine, but that age is past now. The dawn of the age of the anthology was just a false glow on the horizon. This is the age of the paperback book. New writers today serve an apprenticeship in short fiction, and move on to novels. They go from the magazines and anthologies to books, and they seldom go back. It is time we recognized the fact.

The editors at today's big paperback publishing houses -- Avon, Bantam, Dell, Berkley, DAW, Del Rey, Pocket Books, and so on -- are the most influential people in SF today. It is they who can choose to pay five- or six-figure advances, or to pay nothing at all. They decide which titles get promotion, and how much. They build their lines as carefully as magazine editors tend their periodicals. They can give a writer a huge advance, and thereby hope for a masterpiece. They can give security instead of freedom, with multiple book contracts, and encourage regular production. They can also insure hackwork and slipshod craftsmanship by keeping writers in indentured servitude, paying them peanuts, and making them write and write and write.

A single major paperback editor buys more words of fiction in a

GODDAMIT, HARRY! BLUE-
PENCILING EVERY "G"
IN THIS FUCKING PRINTOUT
IS FUCKING STUPID!



year than all the magazine editors combined. When one of them quits, or moves, or is fired, the shock waves spread throughout the genre, touch every active author -- and ultimately every reader as well. They help to determine what I will write, and what you will read.

They choose which backlist classics to reissue, and which are to go out of print, and thereby determine what science fiction WAS. They choose what titles will be published and pushed and promoted, and thereby determine what science fiction IS. And they will determine what science fiction will be.

And the fans and readers don't even know their names.

We should.

Today, the minute a writer who has published three or four stories



Relevance?
What's that got to do
with anything?

shows up at a con, there are six people shoving microphones in his direction, asking for an interview. That's fine, but no one ever interviews our invisible paperback editors, whose views are oh-so-crucial. I recognize the exceptions. The Del Reys have been interviewed, as has Don Wollheim. But what about the others?

Our hypothetical young writer will be invited to be a Guest of Honor at a con after his first book or two. That's fine too, that's wonderful. But those paperback editors publish several books a month, and no one ever asks them to stand up and pontificate about where they think SF is going. Maybe we're afraid they might really know. With us writers, there's small danger of that.

Then there's the awards. Several years back, the old "Best Magazine" Hugo was abolished in favor of a Hugo for "Best Editor". The idea was to make those who edit anthologies and books eligible as well as the magazine editors. A good idea in theory, but it hasn't worked. The magazine editors have dominated the competition, a few anthology editors have competed but none have won, and -- in the life of the award -- only one paperback editor has ever even appeared on the ballot. That was Donald A. Wollheim of DAW, whose initials are on every DAW book (no wonder he has more visibility than the others). And even he has been nominated only once.

Clearly, there's something wrong. Either we need two categories, one for magazines and one for books, or the voters have to start utilizing the "Best Editor" Hugo in the way it was intended, instead of simply nominating the same people year after year, as if they were the only editors in the field.

The problem is one of visibility and identity. We know the magazine editors; the anthology editors get their names printed on the covers and the title page. But the paperback editors -- except for Don Wollheim and the Del Reys, whose names have become their trademarks -- are ciphers. Still, the problem is not insurmountable. A little thought and a little investigation, and one discovers interesting things.

Have you noticed that Ace is doing massive reissues from its backlist, that they've started a paperback magazine, that they're initiating a new fantasy line? Do you approve? The reason is an editor named Jim Baen.

Have you wondered why a relatively small publisher like Berkeley publishes so much good science fiction? David G. Hartwell was the editor there for years and years, and he changed a minor house into one of the most important publishers in SF. This fall he moved to Pocket Books, and it was a major coup, as if GALAXY had hired away John Campbell in the 50s. The Berkeley books you know -- and love, or hate, it doesn't matter -- were his books.

Do you like the stuff Pocket Books published this year, or the year before? My novel, DYING OF THE LIGHT? Ben Bova's COLONY? Kate Wilhelm's novels, THE CLEWISTON TEST and WHERE LATE THE SWEET BIRDS SANG? Marta Randall's JOURNEY? Those were all bought by a woman named Adele Leone, who has since become a literary agent. This will be her last year of eligibility for the "Best Editor" Hugo.

Do you like Dell's wraparound covers, the new kinds of packaging they've been doing, the magazine books they've been buying and issuing, the "Binary Stars" revival of the old Ace Double Novel concept? That's all the doing of a fellow named Jim Frenkel, who has restored Dell to respectability. His immediate predecessor called the stuff "sci-fi".

And there's Bantam, which is what it is because of Fred Pohl and now Sydney Weinberg. And Nancy Neiman at Avon. And Lester and Judy-Lynn Del Rey, of course, and Donald A. Wollheim, and more.

The point is not which one you choose to nominate or vote for. You and I might differ there. I have my own choices for Best Editor. The point is that you remember that they exist, as a class, when it comes time to fill out that all important Hugo nomination form.

Writers don't get enough money. Neither, oddly enough, do editors. I was shocked when I found out how little some of these terribly important people are paid.

Writers don't get enough sex. If any of you want to rectify that, see me after the speech. I speak with less certainty about editors, but I've heard one or two of them complain on that score as well.

But writers do get one thing. Recognition, lots of it. Bylines and honors and awards. Our editors get none of that. Maybe that's why they are such a cranky bunch, always making our lives wretched.

C'mon people, let us give them the recognition they deserve.

That way, maybe, they'll leave the money and sex for us.

SABERS, LASERS AND STARSHIPS

AN INTRODUCTION AND REVIEW OF SCIENCE FICTION
AND FANTASY WARGAMING

BY MIKE GILBERT

PART TWO

In June, I went to Origins -- the annual rotating U.S. board/minatures gaming convention; sound familiar? Well, there is more than just basic convention structure that ties wargaming to science fiction. There is an immense crossover of people between the two fields. For example, Fletcher Pratt wrote a set of naval rules which is still used today. But this is taking me away from that well-known convention clone -- the huckster complex. The wargame convention has a huckster room as good as any science fiction worldcon's. The main difference is the products available. Naturally at wargame conventions, games, rules and figures, plus miscellaneous bric a brac, are the stock in trade. And the hucksters' room is "where it's at". It's reminiscent of an old-style SF con, where all the pros were out in public and accessible to the fans. You can meet game designers, publishers, artists -- even the layout and paste-up crew, if you wish. And, naturally, there is a tremendous amount of business going on at these conventions. But the real similarity between SF and wargame cons is that feeling that the same people are always there, right down to the secret army of eight-year-olds clutching their \$20 and ready to buy. They leave me totally in awe. So if you want to try something different, but not too different, in the way of conventions, and if you have any interest in finding out what gaming is all about, give the wargame convention a chance. You'll find there are a lot of nuts just like you in the world.

Now for those of you who think you have a game idea that will really work, or a book that just naturally lends itself to gaming, here are a few tips. Before you approach any company, check out their products in game or hobby stores. Production quality varies enormously as does the type of games that any given company produces. You'll find excellent graphics and layouts combined with artwork that even an inexperienced neo-fan wouldn't print. For example, Avalon Hill, which puts out a number of good games, fell down terribly when they packaged Heinlein's STARSHIP TROOPER; the box

looks like the worst 1920s style pulp cover, and I never could understand why they didn't try to purchase reprint rights for one of the Emshwiller F&SF covers for the novel.

And now a last word on game design and adaptability of stories. Game companies look for "role-playing" adventures such as Elric, Fafner and the Gray Mouser, Lord of the Rings quests, etc.; SF role-playing games such as Starship Trooper and Faulkenburg's 42; tactical level games either on planet or off and set against space battle or planetary invasion backgrounds; and tactical fantasy board games which include the whole range of battle situations from Robert Adams' Horseclans books to Michael Moorcock's fantasies.

AND SO ... on to figure and game reviews (for further information, send SASE to the appropriate company). MINIATURE FIGURINES (Box P, Pine Plains, NY 12567) has released the finest new range of SF soldiers available. Containing both humanoid and alien types and complete with all sorts of equipment, this range is a real delight.

Tom Loback (DRAGON TOOTH FANTASY, 150 West 26th Street, #502, NY, NY 10001) has the largest line of "strange" figures available. Many designers add figures to Tom's own line, making it the most individual series of figures available. Gothmaug, Lord of Balrogs, is a fine example -- a huge, scaled with flow-

ing bat wings, caped figure carrying an axe and fire whip. And the snake demon curling up from a magic seal of Solomon is truly impressive.

As to spaceships, all modern models belong to one of two schools -- smooth and chunky. Smooth results in the Enterprise, but chunky, ahh ... In the beginning was the discovery. Now the top of the line spaceships are put out by VALIANT (c/o HERITAGE MODELS, INC., 9840 Monroe Drive, Bldg. 106, Dallas TX 75220). Their STARDATE: 3000 series is the finest available; fighters, battleships and everything -- beautiful!

SUPERIOR MODELS, INC. (Claymont, DE) produces a series of ships evolved along lines beyond STAR WARS. The ships are interesting but the paint job of their display models is silly (all white with day-glo markings) and detracts from the ships themselves. SUPERIOR also produces MAATAC, multi-functional armed and armored tactical computer. These are ground-war machines -- some with movable turrets. Some of these are silly; I have my doubts that many war machines of the future will be covered with extensions like the Death Star, but it's their design. These ground craft, representing five "empires", come in six sizes from a massive war machine down to a man-sized attack computer. The scale is 1: 285.



BOARD GAMES:

Taking up once again the subject of Metagaming Microgames, Simulations Publications Inc. has come out with one new and different fun game -- **THE MONSTER THAT ATE SHEY-BOYGAN!** This game features any of a series of 1950s/60s B-movie monsters (like Kong, Mothra, Fan Beast, Godzilla, etc.) attacking the city. The game features everything: police, firemen, fires; get out the popcorn and write your own movie scenario to wreak vengeance on the city of your choice. (I pretend it's L.A.)

INVASION OF THE AIR EATERS and **HOLY WAR** are two goodies produced by METAGAMING (Box 15346, Austin, TX 78761). Both these games are quite playable and fun. **INVASION** features an invasion of Earth in 1983 by a stagnating alien culture. These creatures set up air converters and seek to rid the Earth of "indigenous biological activity". It's a race against time to see if Earth can unite and invent a superior technology to defeat the invaders before the air changes.

HOLY WAR features the vast entity Amtik, some 400,000 km. in size. He has created a universe within himself. Unfortunately it has evolved almost too quickly. The Holy Band live to protect Amtik and seek his divine intervention when the Sun Throwers start hurling suns at Amtik's sensor ducts seeking to disrupt his existence and thus gain access to the greater universe. If Amtik is annoyed enough he may just turn off the whole universe. A truly unique game situation.

One of the best role-playing games now out is **COSMIC ENCOUNTER**, a board game for four players. Each player takes a different alien personality in an attempt to outwit and outbluff the other three. There are now many more "plug-in" modules for this basic package, showing that there is no end to the expansion possibilities of this game.

MORE MINIATURES:

METAGAMING has released a series of 15 mm fantasy creatures for use with its "Fantasy Trip" series or any wargame. The sets include elves, heros/heroines, dragons, wizards, dungeon beasts, trolls and other necessities of gaming. All these figures are well sculpted and are a bargain.

CARD FROM GREG STAFFORD
THE CHAOSMIG
POB 6302
Albany, CA 94706
August 11, 1979

'It is good to see that Fantasy and SF games are beginning to leak into the professional and upper crust fanzines. I refer to Mike Gilbert's article "Sabers, Lasers and Starships" in SFR #32, which was a fair introduction to a complex genre.

'I would like to point out that he made one error there. STOMP! is not by Metagaming, but is by CHAOSMIG, POB 6302, Albany, CA, 94706 and costs only \$2.95.'

ALIEN THOUGHTS CONT. FROM P. 27

CARD FROM GEORGE WARREN
853 N. Hill, Pasadena, CA 91104
July 10, 1979

'Speaking of ALIEN, the current Natl. Enquirer has a fascinating piece about Soviet reports (corroborated by American scientists) that an alien spacecraft blew up near Earth December 18, 1955 (two years before Sputnik) and ten pieces have been drifting in orbit 1200 miles above Earth ever since, the largest of them around 100' in diameter.

'Computers have traced orbits of the surviving pieces back to a single date and place. NASA, if it had the dough, might try sending

the shuttle up to retrieve the pieces, perhaps in cooperation with the Russians.

'Everybody has known the damn stuff was out there since the early sixties -- but not until now have the Soviets decided to stick their necks out and say flatly that the thing was a UFO. Crazy Buck Rogers Stuff Department, eh?'

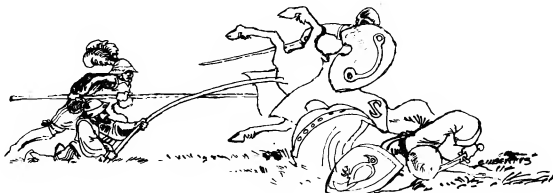
((I would think that alien spaceship debris would be the first order of business for any space program...and would think that by now either we or the Russians would have made rendezvous with that debris and examined it to exhaustion. I cannot conceive of any government admitting it still exists in orbit.))

LETTER FROM BARRY N. MALZBERG
Box 61, Teaneck, NJ 07666
28 Sept. 1979

'Dear Dick:

'I had an insight a couple of weeks ago which I think is important and which I'd like to share with you and, should you see fit, your readers. It has finally come to me to understand why SFR in all its incarnations is the best of the fan magazines and why you are, indisputably, the greatest fan magazine editor in the long history of the field. What you are able to do, through some mystical and doubtless unconscious process, is to bring out the worst in every single one of your contributors.

'I say this, Dick, without a shred of irony and hope that you take this as being a dead-level, even solemn communication. Fred Pohl points out in an essay in CLARION III ("Golden Ages Gone Away") that the key to Horace Gold's editorial genius was his ability to get his writers, somehow, to do their best work, work of which they had



never thought myself capable and I equate your talent, in its own way, with Gold's. A's vanity, B's greed, C's self-delusion, D's obtuseness, E's sipping softheadedness, F's self-pity, G's viciousness...there is something about writing to or for you which causes all of us to go right to the jugular of design...and there we are, our fundamental selves, our own doppelgangers, for all the world to see. Vastly entertaining at the least but for the perceptive reader or the historian, more than that. You give us the truth.

'Needless to say, it's happened to me in your pages and it may well happen again (this letter may show that it is happening right now) but I don't know if you are yourself aware of this great editorial gift and I wanted to share these thoughts with you.

'I say again, this letter is written without a shade of irony.

'What I tell you three times is true. I write you in all seriousness and if you publish, maybe we can all think about it some more.'

((I think you paint with too broad a brush; some of the letter-writers and an occasional columnist has gone off the deep end in these pages, in times past, and may again. But, as I explained some years ago, the reason on this occurs is because I sprinkle a certain kind of brain dust on the pages which when inhaled by the unsuspecting, goes straight to the id and bile in the mind, resulting in a maddened letter, a fulminous column... Of late I'm running low on this powder, but Alter assures me he is brewing up a new batch.

((On the other hand, the wild talent you describe is intriguing... some kind of psi ability, do you think?))

LETTER FROM JONATHAN P.R. PALFREY

29A Priory Road, Kenilworth,
Warwickshire CV8 1LL,
England
29th July 1979

'I refer to your fears expressed about the Central Computer as a potential Big Censor of publications (SFR #31, pp. 4-5). In my opinion this is not a job for a big central computer. The central computer might well hold an index to publications, but if you are publishing SFR by computer I don't see why you shouldn't store it on your own home computer. Anyone who wants a copy can tell his computer to

ringing up your computer and ask for a copy, which your computer will give while recording the transaction and taking whatever steps are necessary to secure and record payment.

'This means that you have the content of every issue completely under your control, even after it's been published -- can easily make changes at any point in the text at any time, and anyone who rings up will get the latest version. It may not be necessary to publish separate issues at all, just keep adding to the body of material as the fit takes you. People could ring up for the latest version at any time, and be charged each time (you either make it a fixed charge, or link it to the amount of new material that particular person was getting).

'Far from being a potential monopoly, computer publication offers an enormous potential for individual enterprise, which could only be censored by continuous monitoring of all phone lines and other communications channels -- a vast undertaking. The government could suppress centralised advertising of publications, but 'word of mouth' could be pretty rapid and effective over a computer network (of private, home computers).'

((Thanks for the fascinating alternative view; speed the day!))



LETTER FROM BRENT A. BYRD, CPA
POB 1009, Huntington Beach,
CA 92647
August 9, 1979

'Your comments in SFR #32 regarding Three Mile Island, and nu-

clear power in general, contain a couple of inaccuracies which I find surprising from one holding himself out as a Libertarian. The paragraph I am referring to reads:

"You pay high utility rates to build a "safe" nuclear power plant ... and when it has an accident and will require perhaps billions more to either repair it or shut it down ... you will be billed for it..."

'Utility power plants under construction are not included in the company's rate base, the total amount of assets on which the company is allowed to earn a given rate of return (ie, charge customers). Only after the plant is completed and placed in service is a return allowed thereon. (This is the reason utilities are allowed to capitalize interest charges on construction -- if they didn't, the interest would be expended with no corresponding revenue.)

'Secondly, as far as I have heard there has not as yet been any decision on who will ultimately bear the cleanup costs. I would agree with the implied unfairness in your statement if the stockholders had truly been allowed to earn a fair return on their investment. However, utility rates of return are held at an artificially low rate, in exchange for which the rate is guaranteed and the public assumes some of the economic risk. Thus, the most reasonable solution appears to be a sharing of the costs, just as the benefits are shared.

'The main problem with the nuclear debate is too much rhetoric and not enough facts. Hope this letter trades a couple of the latter for a bunch of the former.'

((I suspect, if the rate-payer is not billed directly for the costs of building and dismantling nuclear power plants, he will pay indirectly in higher taxes as the utilities write off all those billions as tax deductions. There is NEVER any such thing as a free lunch for the guy and girl on the bottom of the social/economic power pole.))

LETTER FROM GLENN T. WILSON
722 Montclair, Edwardsville,
IL, 62025
Sept. 7, 1979

'I'd like to make a rather belated response to your comments (Aug. '79 issue) on the Three Mile Island nuclear accident: (1) The technicians operating the plant

dummies, (2) The instrumentation should've been more foolproof, and (3) The Basic Babcock and Wilsson design was unwise, because while it got theoretically higher efficiency by using higher temperatures and pressures, this made it more liable to breakdown.

'It's significant that the accident started on the "graveyard" shift. I don't know this particular utility's staffing policies, but very frequently those assigned to the night shift are the least senior and least competent. Also, the top management and engineering people are usually around on the day shift only.

'The instrumentation had apparently "cried wolf" on previous occasions so that the workers disbelieved the reactor's high temperature readings at the crucial moment. The instrumentation, at a cost of a few thousand dollars more, could have measured such crucial variables as the level of water in the reactor. Some of the valves apparently stuck open, or had been left the wrong way at the last maintenance inspection. And the reactor got flooded by so much water that the technicians got panicky about the prospect of a little mildly radioactive water escaping, and made the crucial mistake of cutting off coolant water entirely so that the core partially melted.

'The public brouhaha reminds me somewhat of Asimov's FOUNDATION AND EMPIRE where the Foundation's agents found that the declining Empire is increasingly shutting down its power plants entirely, rather than risk catastrophic explosions by tampering with them. The Empire's "tech-men" know how to run routine operations and maintenance and can make "baling-wire-and-hairpin" quick fixes, but have no idea how the machinery really works. (Taking the analogy a little further, the Japanese, not we alas, are now in the Foundation's role of champion adapters and miniaturizers).

'Actually, most of this Nation's electric and other utilities still seem to be run by solid and competent engineers and accountants, but there are some glaring exceptions -- the dopes at Three Mile Island, and the even bigger idiots a few miles further north in New York City's Consolidated Edison.

'As far as I can make out, Con Ed's switching system is based on the marvelous principle that if the load exceeds the generating capacity, you automatically shut down the generating station. Now, this is fine for protecting the machinery. But it really does seem that the system would work better if they

cut down the power load rather than the power production.

'Other neighboring electric utilities found that helping New York City was like jumping into the water to save a drowning man with lead boots who would desperately wrap his arms around the neck of any would-be rescuer. Selling extra electricity to make up a 10% shortfall is one thing; trying to rescue a city where all the power plants have been dopily closed down is quite another. The only sensible response is to design the power interconnections so they shut off the rescue power when the demand is impossibly high.

'Then again, why did it take the dopes at Con Ed a whole 24 hours to start up their power plants again? As far as I can make out, it takes electricity to restart some of the crucial parts of the machinery -- and they didn't have any electricity did they?

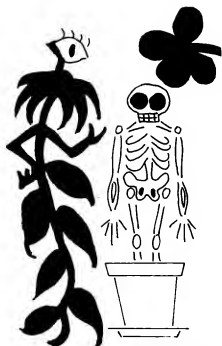
'Now, power shortages are occasionally inevitable if an equipment breakdown unluckily coincides with a week of peak demand; deliberate rotation blackouts may be necessary if no outside power can be bought. People will understand if their neighborhood's power is knocked out temporarily by tree limbs falling in bad weather. And a 5-minute system-wide blackout would be excusable. But a 24-hour shutdown? For crying out loud!

'The moral is, I think, that any kind of machinery had better be designed to be as idiot-proof as possible, because at least a few of the managers and technicians using it will be way below average in competence.

'The breeder reactor, incidentally, sounds ridiculously unsafe. It uses molten sodium to transfer heat to water which produces steam to run the turbines. But any break in the tubes at all will expose the sodium to water, air or both, and produce a simply marvelous big chemical explosion with a splendid mess of hot radioactive caustic soda and hydrogen.

'Come on, AEC. I know that using molten sodium allows higher temperatures and hence higher theoretical efficiencies. But is it worth it? Surely there must be better and safer ways of converting the surplus U-238 into plutonium.

'One last thought on energy: If solar power ever becomes economically practical, what this country really needs is a solar-powered air-conditioner. It would work best exactly when it's most needed, and wouldn't work when it wasn't. Who-



BUT I GAVE IT TONS OF WATER EVERYDAY !

ever invents one first ought to be able to make millions.'

((Making complicated machinery idiot proof will only give a false sense of security---because the idiot-proofing machinery will itself be complicated, and when it breaks down....

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THE VIVISECTOR

A Column By Darrell Schweitzer



JESUS ON MARS

By Philip Jose! Farmer
Pinnacle, 1979, 256 pp., \$1.95

Whenever I tell anybody about this book they usually break up laughing, not because it is a bad novel, or a deliberately funny one, but because of the hilarious circumstance of JESUS ON MARS, one of the silliest-sounding titles of all time and a book about exactly what it sounds like it's about, being written for Roger Elwood. I may be wrong, but I believe this was written for the short-lived Futurian series Elwood edited for Pinnacle right before he left the SF field. Obviously Farmer, someone suggested, was having his little joke.

Yes, I suspect he is, and it's a very subtle, deadpan one, and the result is a book of medium quality, a lot better than DARE, which I reviewed last issue. It has the usual Farmer failing of being a rather routine execution of a superior idea, but it certainly keeps you reading.

An Earth expedition discovers a human civilization on Mars. When the astronauts break open a tin of rations they discover much to their shock that the Martians are orthodox Jews and recoil at anything unkosher. It transpires that these folks are descendants of a random sampling of humanity picked up by aliens in the First Century A.D. among whom were the apostle Matthias and some followers, who proceeded to convert everybody to pre-Pauline Christianity.

Oh, yes, it seems they have the messiah in residence among them.

All jokes and gags (a spaceship called Barsoom and a character named John Carter) aside, Farmer carries this outrageous and intriguing situation through 256 pages with the standard lecture tour the earthman/explorer always gets when he comes upon the aliens/lost race, and, as usual, our hero disagrees dissent in what looks like a utopian society and promptly gets drawn into it. But the plot isn't one of revolution. That can't happen because Jesus is real and has superhuman powers. The climax and the crisis of the hero's

own faith (he is a Jew) come when Jesus decides to return to Earth. Along the way it is suggested, as the cover blurb tells us, that Jesus might be (1) the genuine article (2) a spirit of some sort (3) a Martican (4) an energy creature from a distant star. By allowing some doubt and a possible rational explanation, Farmer keeps the story within the realm of science fiction. It isn't straight religious fantasy. Those that avoid such might still want to read this.

I think you will remember the basic situation and the enigmatic figure of Christ, but none of the human characters. They never manage to quite come alive. One wishes that Farmer would apply himself and write the first class novel he is capable of, but he hasn't, so JESUS ON MARS is fun, but no great shakes.

NEW DIMENSIONS

Ed. Robert Silverberg
Harper & Row, 1979, 212 pp., \$10.95

It's always dangerous to say this or that element is the essential element of fiction. Somebody like Borges will always write a counter-example. But I think it is safe to say that unless you are Borges or a genius of similar calibre, all stories, even short ones, must have human elements. There must be some emotional content. There must be character. Somewhere the story must intersect with the realities of existence. Otherwise you have a NEW WORLDS doodle or an ANALOG schematic diagram. (In the sense of the sort we point out as "an ANALOG story" when we don't like it, meaning ANALOG shouldn't have published it.) It would seem from his column in GALILEO 14 that Robert Silverberg agrees:

'(Where the "New Wave" went wrong in the 60s) in search of new ways of telling stories, in emphasizing style over content, we departed from the primary goal of fiction... We played with our readers' heads on all sorts of levels, but turned away from that substructure of event and character and conflict that in calmer times we accept as indispensable.'

So with some degree of puzzlement I must ask: Why is it that NEW DIMENSIONS 9 seems devoted to repeating the mistakes of the past? The above paragraph sums up all but four of the stories. "Calibrations and Exercises" by Gregory Benford is one of those stories about a sterile, dull, dehumanizing society which is in itself dehumanizing, sterile, dull, etc. George Orwell made this sort of thing interesting with real characters and an attempt (even if tragically foredoomed to failure), but when there is only stasis and the characters are emotionless from start to finish, the reader is likely to start yawning. Felix Gotschalk's "Square Pony Express" is the purest example of style without content (by which I suppose we mean without non-trivial content) I have seen in a long time. It seems to be an exercise in telling a fragment of a narrative in the most diffuse, roundabout manner possible. If Mark Twain's famous rule, "Use the right word, not its second cousin", were applied, it would not merely collapse; it would evaporate. For example:

'My hoods of my visual tablets snapped open, and I could see the thin yellow bar of the helio-band pop up over the iron-hard ridge of the pure horizon line, that infinitely receding far off reference point of linearity.' (P. 109)

My feeling is, anyone who cares to read prose like that can have it, but I don't think it'll appeal to



fiction readers very much. The ironic thing is that the next sentence is, "It was daybreak", rendering the foregoing redundant, even where it isn't already within itself. I have nothing against freaky styles as long as they work, i.e. describe things and bring the mood across more clearly than regular prose, not drastically less so, as this does. I wonder if Gotschalk might not be trying to imitate David Bunch and failing abysmally.

But no more of this. I don't like to write killer reviews. I try to pick books I'll like, and bad reviews result when I am disappointed. The curious thing is that there are two very good stories in this volume, which I ended up recommending for Nebulas, and two more that are first sales and are at least promising starts for their authors.

Ursula LeGuin's "The Pathways of Desire" starts out as a typical anthropologists-on-South-Sea-Island-in-space story, only with better realised characters than most of the type, but then it comes to grips with the unlikelihood of the situation in a manner which will surprise you. Michael Connor's "Last" is a playful bit of black humor about the last man in the world who wants to be last because he is fascinated with the role. (These are the two I think are award quality.) Peter S. Alterman's "Binding Energy" is told from the novel viewpoint of a computer program (which is somewhat different from the usual sentient computer) and avoids most of the clichés of machine intelligence stories until falling right into one at the end. I don't know why writers always assume sentient computers can transplant their minds into human beings, a feat which is obviously far more formidable a technical accomplishment than building a sentient machine. One does not necessitate the other.

Tony Sarowitz's "A Passionate State of Mind" is more of a character sketch than a story, although there is a rudimentary story there. It's certainly the most intense piece in the book, the only one, as the title might imply, to bring across any real passion. It's about scientific creativity and the kind of obsessive drive which leads to breakthroughs. The writing is very good. Sure enough, Sarowitz has gone on to produce better things since this one was sold. I think he'll go far.

Only four good stories in an eleven dollar book. Bad news. Worse, NEW DIMENSIONS is beginning to remind me of NEW WORLDS (both the old magazine and the paperback quarterlies) and ORBIT in an ominous

way. The stories in NEW WORLDS are always very good, the problem being there were only one or two per issue. ORBIT at its worst never went so far, there also minimum standards of readability were not maintained. (This has changed, but too late. See my review of Volume 20 last issue.) If 75% of the contents lack the essential humanity to raise them from prose exercises into living fiction, the result is commercial suicide. Now you know why magazines like F&SF, ANALOG and ASIMOV's go chugging along steadily while anthologies rise and fall. The very best stories in the anthologies may be better than the best in the magazines, but it's the worst that kills them.



A READER'S GUIDE TO SCIENCE FICTION
by Baird Searles, Martin Last, Beth Meacham and Michael Franklin.
Introduction by Samuel R. Delany
Avon, 1979, 266 pp., \$2.95

I suspect this book will be of great service to the novice reader who has no idea what has been written in the field or who the major authors are, but for the rest of us, better reference works are available. The bulk of this volume consists of summaries of the writings of roughly 200 authors done without any attempt to evaluate. We are told what sort of material each one writes, irrespective of how good it is. Only in extreme cases like E.E. Smith, Homer Eon Flint and Otis Adelbert Kline is there a hint that the fiction being described might leave something to be desired. (Well, Raymond F. Jones is called conventional and unchallenging.) This might give the impression that the authors think all SF is great, save that an essay at the end of the book shows otherwise. But still, the book is not a guide to quality at all (nor does it try to be, to be fair), only to similarity. We

are told who to try next if we like author X. ("If you like Pangborn, try Theodore Sturgeon, James Schmitz and Walter Miller, Jr.")

As an actual bibliographical or bibliographical research tool (which, again, in fairness, it doesn't try to be) the book falls far short of ANATOMY OF WONDER and the TUCK ENCYCLOPEDIA. It won't tell the experienced reader much he doesn't already know. Thus I found myself testing my knowledge against the authors', looking for errors. And I found the statement that Pohl did not start collaborating with Kornbluth until 1952, which is correct in the sense of bylines used, but wrong because they'd been collaborating under pseudonyms since about 1940. The date for "Nerves" is wrong. The one flat-out colossal blunder I found was the statement that Daniel Keyes wrote not one word of SF other than "Flowers for Algernon". Obviously our authors did not bother to do the most elementary research. A quick look in the M.I.T. index reveals 8 stories published between 1952 and 1963. Keyes also wrote another science fiction novel, THE TOUCH, the existence of which is mentioned on the jacket of FLOWERS FOR ALGERNON.

I think the entry on Edmond Hamilton puts far too much emphasis on Captain Future without mentioning the revolutionary (so much so it couldn't be published for 20 years after it was written) "What's It Like Out There?" and I suspect our authors are wholly unfamiliar with his early work. Hamilton was one of the last practitioners of the lost race fantasy. He didn't just write space opera.

As long as we're in the realm of opinion, I would question some of the entries on the list of "basic" SF works: Delany's DHALGREN and Hodgson's THE NIGHT LAND. Good God, if this is a book for new readers, don't scare them off! Also, the authors are the first people I know of to proclaim M. John Harrison's THE CENTAURI DEVICE a major and seminal work. They may like it a lot, but let's not get carried away.

Also I can't agree with the statement that SF art has "never recovered" from the death of the pulps. In the 1940s, virtually all magazine covers were Bug-eyed monster and nude maiden pictures. Thus, while there were good Bok and Finlay interiors, the only consistent markets for good color work were ASTOUNDING and WEIRD TALES (which had pioneered and abandoned the nude cover a decade ahead of everybody else) while later on things expanded tremendously. Books like TOMORROW AND BEYOND show SF art to be in fine health. I'll take Enshwiler, the Dillons,

Schoenherr, Barr, Freas and Di Fate over Earle Bergey and day.

Overall, a good item to slip in with that first batch of books you give to the prospective convert.

THE SCIENCE FICTION STORIES OF WALTER M. MILLER

Intro. by David Samuelson
Gregg Press, 1978, 373 pp., \$15.00

This book consists of facsimile reprints of the two Miller collections, A VIEW FROM THE STARS and CONDITIONALLY HUMAN and inadequate as it may be in some ways, it is long overdue. It is only inadequate in that it gives us but the tip of the Miller iceberg. Since he quit writing over twenty years ago, his work has not been adequately promoted or reprinted. A CANTICLE FOR LEIBOWITZ seems to be one of those classics which will remain in print forever, but beyond that, not much of his work is available any more. He published a total of 41 stories between 1951 and 1957, including one novel, THE RELUCTANT TRAITOR, in AMAZING in 1953, which has never been reprinted. According to an interview with Chad Oliver, who knew Miller, in the current SUMERMORN (#3, \$1.00 a copy from Tom Geddie, 2406-A Hollandale Circle, Arlington TX, 76010), this was sold to one of the specialty publishers in the 1950s, who went broke before publishing it. So, while the Gregg Press volume is an excellent beginning, there is enough material around for three more books at least this size.

Reading these stories we get an idea of where Miller came from artistically. Only one of them ("Crucifixus Etiam") is as good as LEIBOWITZ, but the others show a definite progression toward that height. Miller did not begin in the highbrow magazines of the period, but in Howard Browne's AMAZING, which meant bang-bang fiction of the hoariest pulp tradition. This was the first thing he had to outgrow. Some of the stories proceed through break-neck action at the expense of plot, character and idea, but gradually the portraits of the people become more sensitive and the clichés recede. Humor begins to appear. One surprisingly good, early effort is the 1951 FANTASTIC ADVENTURES novella, "Dark Benediction", which is about a world ravaged by a loathsome disease which turns the skin grey and gives the victim an urge to infect others by touching them. But it turns out that the "plague" is really a blessing, a symbiotic organism which will raise man to a higher stage of evolution. The hero's problem is to overcome the prejudice of others and his own re-

vulsion to accept this. The deck is only minimally stacked by love interest. The portrait of a monastic community coming to terms with the condition and trying to face the future constructively is particularly memorable. This story had all the indications of Miller's latter success.

"The Darfsteller" won him his first Hugo. This is a more complex story than it seems at first, about an actor pushed out of the theater by robot performers. It's about the whole concept of art as something integral to the artist's personality, not just something he does in front of audiences. Some of the circumstances are a bit contrived, and not all the characters are as three-dimensional as one might want, but the story works. Every time it seems about to fall into a conventional groove, it turns fresh again. "Crucifixus Etiam", about an ignorant Peruvian laborer on Mars who finds he cannot go home and must sacrifice himself for future generations is simply superb. No melodrama, vivid characterizations even of the spear-carriers, no wasted wordage.

Some of the other stories begin well, but trivialize themselves. "You Triflin' Skunk" has a powerful situation, essentially that of Lovecraft's "The Dunwich Horror" with a boy who has been fathered by a Thing which is coming back for him and communicates via telepathy in the meantime. Unlike Lovecraft's version, Miller's character is sympathetic. Unfortunately, before the story gets very far the boy's hillbilly mother shoots the alien because it had slighted her virtue.

"Anybody Else Like Me?" contains a very sensitive picture of an intelligent woman trapped in a suburban housewife role and bored out of her mind. Her biggest problem is that she is telepathic, and the only telepath in the neighborhood has fascist ideas about finding a race of supermen. He's coming to rape her. This is suspenseful, powerful stuff, but as soon as the enemy is destroyed, the story ends, the basic problems of the character still unresolved. All that Miller wrote was good, but there wasn't enough.

There is another, more pervasive problem, which makes these stories an instructive reader for contemporary SF writers. Miller was not very good at making the future seem real. He lacked Heinlein's feel for everyday detail. His best stories are those with limited settings (the theater, the work camp on Mars) or present day ones. Otherwise he tended to project his own time into the future. Literal-

ly the stories hold up. Socially they are dated. Of course, contemporary writers do the same thing, but it may take twenty years for it to show. (Or less. Spinrad's BUG JACK BARRON, allegedly about the late 1980s, already has a period-piece feel to it.) I think feminists may be outraged at some of the sexual attitudes in these stories, but Miller was not addressing those issues. He took the ideas for the early 50s for granted and put them in the future.

In "Dumb Waiter" we have a wholly incompetent woman who is dragged about, beaten out of hysteria, and at one point described by our hero as a "good animal" fit only for nursing babies, but if you read closely, you see the point is that she is technologically incompetent, having taken her environment for granted without trying to understand it. When it collapses, so does she. Her equally incompetent husband committed suicide rather than cope. However, in this and other stories, Miller doesn't seem to imagine that the roles of women might change, even as much as they have changed between then and now.

In "Blood Bank" the setting is so far in the future that interstellar mankind is not sure where he came from and a new intelligent species has evolved on Earth but still the only female characters are a secretary who sits behind a desk in a front office and a lady spaceship pilot who is abrasive and aggressive, smokes cigars and even wears denims (!). Most of Miller's futures are not convincing. They feel like 1950s suburbia.

"Conditionally Human" is a very good story about the fight to win legal rights for artificial creatures, but the setting is like the neighborhood I grew up in, without any significant differences except those directly related to the story's premise (as if, contrary to John Campbell's rule, the future happened One At A Time), and the female lead is a typical housewife. Obviously the man who could write "Anybody Else Like Me?" wasn't a misogynist, but he did fail to think through a lot of the background details in his stories. Despite this, his best stories are still very good indeed, and collections of them are not only good reading for the most part, but also of definite historical interest.

PESSIMISM IS THE SOLIPSIST'S NATURAL
STATE OF MIND—FROM AGE 50 ONWARD

—ALTER EGO

YOU GOT NO FRIENDS IN THIS WORLD

A Review Of Short Fiction By Orson Scott Card

One of the problems and one of the delights of being a reader is that a writer whose work has never much appealed to you will, sometimes, up and write himself a story that you love. It's a delight because it means you can occasionally be pleasantly surprised, receiving a gift from someone you thought incapable of giving it. It's a problem because it means that you can never completely write off a writer -- even if you have been bored witless by everything else of his that you have read, there's still a chance that the next one will be good.

Barry Longyear has done that to me. He has been even more ubiquitous in ISAC ASIMOV'S SCIENCE FICTION MAGAZINE than I have been in ANALOG in the past year or so (actually, ANALOG readers are at last getting a respite from me). But try as I would, I couldn't bring myself to be anything but bored by his work. I knew that his work must appeal to somebody -- the letters in the Asimov magazine are not staff-written -- but certainly I was not one of those somebodyes.

And then I got a letter from a writer I admire, in which she mentioned that the latest Barry Longyear was a masterpiece. I was surprised. But I decided to read with a more open mind.

She was right, but so was I.

There are five Barry Longyear stories in this review period. Conversely, I read them in the wrong order. Longyear has been building up an audience for his series of stories set on Momus, a world founded by a stranded circus and where the circus is the center of their lives. "The Starshow", in ASIMOV'S SF ADVENTURE MAGAZINE, (Fall, 1979), is really two stories, "The Last Show on Earth" and "Follow the Red Wagons". Both are prequels to the series, taking place before the circus ship City of Maraboo got stranded on Momus. And both suffer from the same disease -- the writer is taking far too much for granted.

In the first, all reader involvement, every incident in the story, depends on the idea that the circus is wonderful, beautiful, worth preserving for its own sake. The trouble is, while a few of the characters say that, there is nothing in the story to show it. We see none of the life of the circus. We see only

the nebulous idea of the circus, as if that were enough. As if saying circus should make my eyes well up with tears and nostalgia tug at my heart.

And, in the second story, about a girl on a strange planet who wants to run away with the circus, again I do not understand the mystique. Worse, it becomes clear that every one in Longyear's circus is a sweetheart. People are so sickeningly nice that I not only don't believe them, I want to strangle them. And when the plot is resolved by the incredible coincidence of having the judge in the crucial trial just happen to be another sweetheart of a former circus man -- let me kindly say that it strained my patience.

I persevered and read "Priest of the Maraboo" (IASfm July). Same problems. All the circus people unbelievably good, without exception. No individual character development among them. Only a couple of mercenary soldiers were developed at all -- and not enough to explain their change of heart at the end, not without making me wonder why they hadn't had the change of heart right at the beginning. And "Dreams" (IASfm Aug) was a piece of fluff written to explain an illustration, accomplishing nothing.

So when I started reading "Enemy Mine" (IASfm Sep) you can understand that try as I might, I was not predisposed to like it. I had already concluded that while Longyear was competent at putting words together reasonably coherently, he had no sense of what made a good story. That had been my opinion before, and all four stories I had read so far vindicated that opinion.

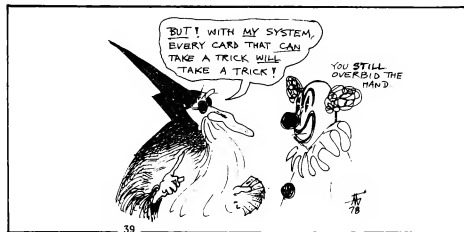
"Enemy Mine" was the story my friend had called a masterpiece. She was right.

It is a beautifully-told account of an accidental friendship between a human and an alien, soldiers who had tried to kill each other, now stranded together on a hostile world where they learn each other's language and each other's way of thought. It is easy to say that they become friends; it is more accurate to say that this time Longyear does what he failed to do before: He shows us the development of their friendship, step by painful step, so that I not only know but also feel the love and trust they have for each other. I cared, very deeply, what happened. The surrounding details were rich and convincing; I even felt that I had been given a quick and painless course in an alien language. There were several electric moments: When the human confronts his friend's hostile parent; when the Drac child opens its parent's tomb, to be sure its hand had only three fingers. If I have any quarrel with Longyear's story at all, it is that the ending felt a little rushed.

I only resent having had to kiss so many frogs to find the prince.

THE HARD STUFF -- "IDEAS FIRST"

There are a lot of definitions of the term hard SF. Mine is that the ideas are the writer's most cherished objective, and characters and plot exist only to explain the ideas. The ideas can range from philosophy to machinery, but in hard SF you end up knowing the idea





far better than you know any character. Some of the best of classic SF is like that. "Nightfall", "The Nine Billion Names of God", "The Sentinel", "The Star" -- there isn't a character in one of those stories.

And Asimov can still pull it off, as in the slight story "The Backward Look" (IASfm Sep). It's a Black Widowers story, on the surface. In fact, it is a cleverly handled science article, in which he discusses eclipses of the sun and moon. The characters are meaningless except to make the science lecture palatable. And it works. I enjoyed the story.

More recently-spawned writers, however, usually fail to achieve Asimov's entertainment level. Perhaps the reason Charles Sheffield's "Skystalk" (DESTINIES, Aug-Sep) frustrated me was because he was obviously trying to make his characters believable and interesting and failed. The story concerns a terrorist attempt to hold the world for ransom by threatening to blow up the skystalk, a space elevator that, if severed, could cause millions of deaths by striking the earth like an erratic cracked whip. The heroes solve the problem. Period. Sheffield's writing is clear and good, but the story consists of setting up the problem, thinking of a solution, and carrying it out. And that's it. If you like that kind of story, with no other value to it, then this is a good one.

George Zebrowski's "The World Sweep" (F&SF Aug) is an ideas-first story of a different kind. The writer comes up with a marvelous idea -- in this case, "What if every word you said turned into a solid object, so that conversations ran the risk of filling up the world?" -- and writes a story about it. But once you've said the idea, you've had the whole story. There's nothing more. It's fun, but in the end it feels pointless because the attempts at characterization are so meaningless. Dean R. Lamb's "Damn Shame" (ANALOG Sep) felt more successful only because it didn't try so hard to seem more than it was. Lamb tells the story through letters, which let little character show through, and because the story is short and unpretentious, the idea achieved its effect.

And then there's an exception. "Graveside Watch", by Edward H. Gandy (ONNI Sep), depends on a single punch, an idea revealed at the end. But Gandy actually succeeds in creating a character, an eccentric con man who knows how to get what he wants, and when the effect of the twist ending has worn off, the character remains, and the story is better than the idea. It is possible. And it just makes me feel more disappointed with the others -- for all of them were written by writers of genuine talent, who could have done more. The obvious answer is that they didn't want to do more. If that's true, then my frustration with the stories is a result of my bias, not their failure: I believe a writer should want to do more.

NEW SONG ON OLD THEMES

Hey, here's an idea for you. A bunch of clones are raised together, see, and because they have the same genetic heritage, they lack individuality -- oh, you've heard it? Wrong. You haven't. It's an old idea, but in "The Quintessence of Galahad Sypher," Joseph Kosiewski (IASfm July) does new things with it. He concentrates on the upbringing of the five identical children and their gradual discovery that someone has been playing God with their lives, and ends his story when they break free. He stops where most other writers would have begun; he spends his time in the areas that most would have skipped over. And he proves that one of the best stories this year can result when a good writer turns to a hackneyed theme. It isn't the idea that makes a fine story -- it's a fine writer.

Two more of the best stories this quarter are also rehashes of old themes. W.T. Quick's "Instructions Enclosed" (ANALOG Oct) is just another story of a computer that achieves sentience. Except that Quick has done it better than I've ever seen it done before, perhaps because the first sign of the computer's intelligence is that it writes poetry. This is a dangerous idea -- almost every time an SF writer puts poetry into his work he proves that he should only show his poems to his friends. But Quick wrote good poems, awkward because the computer is experimenting, powerful because they are rich in ideas and emotions, obviously the product of a heart as well as a mind. The final poem is a clincher that raises this story above the level of most that have used the theme.

And Alan Ryan, in "You're Real, Come, Said the Robot, and Turned to Watch the Snowflakes" (F&SF Aug), has written another story of a human being who discovers that his robots are only a mirror of himself. A mild-mannered Frankenstein's monster. But Ryan creates a painfully empty protagonist, who looks in the mirror he has created to discover that he has no reflection.

Four other stories use old themes, all of them stories about aliens in contact with earth. D.C. and Lin Poyer, in "Silent Trade" (GALILEO Sep), retell the theme of "To Serve Man" -- aliens devouring human beings with human cooperation, in exchange for their solving our problems. A rehash, but a fairly good one. In "Home is the Hunter" (ANALOG Aug), Stephen Tall puts aliens on earth in human disguise, where they are seduced by the joys of the flesh. They found, you see, the perfect human companion -- all to the frustration of their slightly alcoholic superiors, who are monitoring them from out in space. A fun story.

John Morressy's "The Empath and the Savages" (ONNI July) was not quite as successful. As in "Home is the Hunter", he has aliens studying the earth to see whether humans are worth keeping around, but this is another ideas-first story, with the aliens not emerging as characters and the humans who are brought on board ship reduced to mere stereotypes. It was also a bit absurd to have humanity redeemed by the good-guy nature of an astronaut, the last sample, as if astronauts were the best the earth has ever produced, a dubious proposition. And yet the story does have a strong ending, even if it is a bit too optimistic about the future of man.

As if to carry this theme to absurdity, "The Angel of Death" by Michael Shea (F&SF Aug), is also about an alien who comes to earth in human form to study mankind. But Shea's tale is the best of the lot -- a funny, ironic, and ultimately powerful story of a well-meaning alien superhero who is trying to give the humans he comes in contact with exactly what they most want. This can be a pleasure, when he runs into a sex-starved, beautiful woman; it is terrifying when he meets a Son-of-Sam-type murderer.

GIANT ANT STORIES

Who would have believed it? Two of the finest young writers in the field today have both, in the same month, come up with giant ant stories. Ed Bryant's "giants" (ANALOG Aug) is a delightful tour-de-

force. It could have been written on a bet -- "Hey, Ed, betcha can't write a giant ant story that doesn't violate the square-cube law" -- but it is a witness of Bryant's caliber as a writer that he was incapable of treating it as a joke. Instead, while he wins the bet, he also creates a strong character, and the climax of the plot is actually overshadowed by the character climax -- a little matter of a broken stained-glass window.

And George R.R. Martin, while his creatures aren't exactly ants, certainly has taken the ant farm to its logical, terrifying climax in "Sandkings" (OMNI Aug). This story will certainly be on a ballot in the novelette category. Departing from his frequent sentimentality (which he handles very well), Martin moves to horror (which he handles just as well). Simon Kress, the protagonist, discovers that he can be worshipped as God by a group of tiny alien creatures. And then proceeds to shape them in his own sadistic, selfish image.

MAN AT WAR

What does war do to soldiers? D.C. Poyer, in "Universal Soldier" (GALILEO July), chillingly decides that the best soldiers wouldn't be human at all -- they'd be androids, who felt nothing at all as they killed and killed and killed.

In contrast, Neal Barrett, Jr., lets his soldiers go to war as humans. But in "Hero" (F&SF Sep), one of my favorite stories this quarter, he has his protagonist fight in a war with a race of aliens who exact a terrible price from the soldiers who kill them. When the hero comes home to Earth, he finds that he has lost everything that might have made that homecoming meaningful.

An enlisted man and an officer discover that they can't survive without each other in Raylyn Moore's "Standoff" (F&SF Aug); the army, you see, designed rations that any fool, and only a fool, could use. I was a little bothered by the fact that the stalemate wasn't really a stalemate -- the enlisted man would eventually have won, if he had wanted to.

The perfect soldier, of course, is one of Fred Saberhagen's Berserkers. I hadn't read any of the Berserker series, despite good intentions; Saberhagen's "Some Events in the Templar Radiant" (DESTINIES Aug-Sep) was my first exposure. In this story of a scientist playing with fire by trying to put together a damaged Berserker in such a way that it remains harmless, Saberhagen proves not only that he can pull

off an excellent adventure story, but also that he is a vastly underrated writer. He seemed to be a shy man, the one time I met him, and this shows up in a rather subdued writing style; but surely his subtlety should not conceal his masterful writing! Perhaps those best-equipped to appreciate his talent are often those least likely to be drawn to what appears to be a straightforward adventure story.

"Triggerman" by William Walling (F&SF Sep), takes place after a war between humans and an incredibly aggressive alien species; some troublemakers want to shatter the peace, and so the human protagonist finds himself in an almost impossible dilemma on board a ship carrying some of the most important of the alien leaders. Walling creates a fascinating race of aliens, and uses the story to explore their character -- but, more important, to explore the human character as well. Another of the best stories this quarter.

FANTASIES

The best thing in the fall issue of ASIMOV'S SF ADVENTURE MAGAZINE is "The Things That Are Gods" by John Brunner. It is also one of the best stories this year. It is about a powerful traveler who grants people's wishes, often to their hurt; this time, however, he grants two conflicting wishes that almost destroy him. The fantasy world is interesting, the characters are well-drawn, but best of all is that John Brunner's writing sings.

Bob Leman's "Change of Address" (F&SF Sep) is often funny, often biting. A part of the mind of God, in pursuit of another, erring part, enters the mind of Willis Barley, a bookkeeper with dreadful taste and little imagination. His inebriation changes all that, often to his consternation, and leads him to sample all the forbidden pleasures.

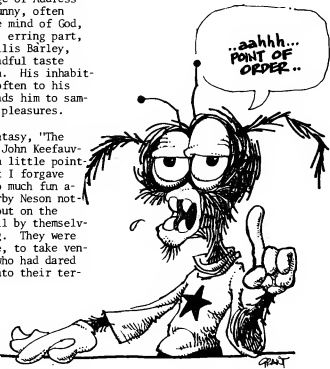
Another modern fantasy, "The Rocks That Moved", by John Keefauver (OMNI July), felt a little pointless by the end -- but I forgave that because it was so much fun along the way. Old Kirby Neson noticed that some rocks out on the desert were moving, all by themselves -- even reproducing. They were getting ready, you see, to take vengeance on the humans who had dared to bring foreigners into their territory.

Mary H. Schaub's "The Court of the Timesifters" (GALILEO Sep) is ostensibly science fiction; I use my own judgment to move it into the fantasy category because, though the hero arrived in a spaceship, the world he is visiting is medieval and uses unexplained magic. Science fiction or fantasy, the story is wonderful. The protagonist is a historian who wants to drudge through the delicious past of a tradition-bound world; he falls in with a companion he can't get rid of, who is bent on leading him into excitement. The story is funny, exciting, pure pleasure -- except for the last two paragraphs, which seemed as if the writer were trying to put a punchline on a story that deserves better.

I don't understand "The Fox and the Hedgehog" by John Anthony West (OMNI Aug). The writing is affected, jarring, absurd. The story doesn't end satisfyingly at all. I mention it only because, in spite of that, I enjoyed every minute of it and can't forget it. Which means that, while my ignorance is occasionally impenetrable, my gut reactions can be reached in spite of me.

IMMORTALITY AIN'T ALL IT'S CRACKED UP TO BE

Why are science fiction writers so pessimistic about immortality? We seem to have decided that it's boring, destructive, or otherwise undesirable. I've written some stories like that myself. But I suspect it's all sour grapes. Admit



it -- if you really had a chance to put off death, or the death of people you love, you'd do it, wouldn't you? In a minute. But we keep on writing about how terrible immortality is. Maybe as a warning of what to watch out for if we ever achieve it. Michael Bishop's essay-disguised-as-a-story, "A Few Last Words for the Late Immortals" (ANALOG July), explores the pain that only an immortal can feel -- of losing something you thought to keep forever. And David Bunch, in "When the Metal Eaters Came" (GALAXY 39:10) brilliantly creates a terrifying metaphor for our own deaths. Men have remade themselves in metal, so they can live forever. But old age comes to them the way it figuratively comes to us as a million metal-eating fleas that devour us a bite at a time.

QUICK STABS

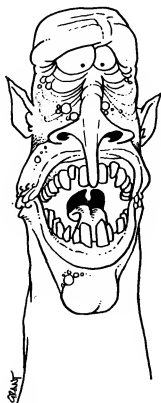
Only because I'm running out of room will I treat the remaining stories with cavalier brevity.

Certainly Connie Willis's "Homing Pigeon" (GALILEO July) is one of the most beautiful stories I've read. The idea sounds tacky -- harnessing the psychic energy of a wife waiting for her husband to come home -- but Willis is an extremely talented writer who turns the idea into a poignant, involving tale. Not quite as successful is "Jahrratta Dki" by George Florance-Guthridge, in the same issue of GALILEO. It deals with an Olympics of the future, in which carefully regulated cyborgs compete, each athlete participating in almost all the events. The final revelation of the story was rather a let-down, but it was still an interesting story.

Jesse Peel is coming out of the closet -- he is really Oregon writer Steve Perry, who is making the transition by collaborating with himself in "Solo", by Steve Perry and Jesse Peel (IASfm SEP). It is a touching story of a young man obsessed with vindicating himself in the eyes of his dead father -- and vindicating his mother in the process. Though Steve has a tendency to use too many exclamation points, which made me feel as if I had somehow failed by not being that excited, he still made the young man's achievement in mastering an alien musical instrument seem fulfilling. This story goes a long way toward making up for his "Star Warriors" (GALAXY 39:10), a blatant, self-conscious STAR WARS rip-off that commits two unforgivable sins -- being utterly derivative, and yet being better than the official STAR WARS novels. Perhaps it only works because Steve puts his tongue as

far into his cheek as George Lucas did in the original movie, something the other novelizers neglected to do.

"Kinsman" by Ben Bova (OMNI Sep) is a fun story, the kind of thing that makes you wish you were an astronaut. In a delightful, bantering style, incurably optimistic, Ben was able to make me feel almost nostalgic in his evocation of the awe at seeing the stars from space for the first time. "In Adam's Fall" by Jayge Carr (ANALOG Oct), is a good story, if a little sketchy, about how humans play God to another race, and how cruelty "for your own good" can be a contagious disease.



Two stories, with very different intentions, deliberately ape the style of dead authors. Mack Reynolds, in "The Case of the Disposable Jalopy" (ANALOG Oct), parodies Rex Stout's Nero Wolfe series, writing about the characters when they are senile and broke. But he uses a meat-ax, and goes on far too long to end up as entertainingly as he began. Joanna Russ, on the other hand, seems to have taken herself very seriously in "The Extraordinary Voyages of Amelie Bertrand" (F&SF Sep), a conscious imitation of Jules Verne. She succeeded very well in imitating him -- but left me puzzled as to why she bothered. Verne was hardly a good writ-

er, however seminal he might have been to the field of science fiction. And Russ didn't even choose to imitate his most interesting work -- she succeeded only in being pedestrian.

Fantasy and Science Fiction, because its priority is on writing quality rather than reading ease, occasionally publishes "noble failures", stories that don't really work but are still worth reading. Certainly Richard Cowper's "Out There Where the Big Ships Go" (Aug) is in that category. The story is well done, with some well-developed characters into an interstellar game of Go that demands total dedication and, the players discover, something more. But the story calls up my memories of Herman Hesse's *Magister Ludi*, and I was frustrated because Cowper did not come near fulfilling the promise of the work. As the seed of a much longer novel, it is excellent. Equally frustrating was Donnel Stern's "Reunion" (F&SF Sep). As a nostalgic trip back into boyhood it was wonderful; it was the science fiction elements that didn't quite come off, that left me feeling that the story was a little silly after all.

Some stories are weakened by being part of a series or a piece of a larger work. Frederick Pohl's "Mars Masked" reviewed a couple of issues ago, was wonderful. "Cool War" (IASfm Aug) continues the adventures of Reverend H. Hornswell Hake, and I suspect that if I read both stories in order, as part of a novel, I would have liked them both equally. But reading them separately, "Cool War" felt like more of the same. And that problem also interfered with my enjoyment of Spider Robinson's "Fivesight" (OMNI July). It's one of the Callahan's Saloon stories. I enjoy that series a lot. The trouble is that Robinson's characters are getting just a little too cocky, a little too self-conscious. They seem to take it for granted that because they're a bunch of real sweet guys they can solve the problems of everyone who comes in. Some day I hope Robinson gives them their come-uppance -- a problem they can't smooth over at all, one that tears them up and makes them, some of them, a little vicious, a little human. Even so, "Fivesight" is a good story.

I wish I could say the same for Edward Byers's "A Far and Foreign Shore" (ANALOG Sep). A sequel to his praiseworthy "Pathway", this story really is more of the same, with perfunctory villains who are perfunctorily disposed of. The idea behind this story was good enough to deserve better -- I hope there's a major rethinking and re-

writing before this series turns into the inevitable novel.

HUMOR

Humor, a stepchild in science fiction, is of course left for last. I have enjoyed Gary Jennings's stories about Crispin Mobe, and I can give "Ignis Fatuus" (F&SF Sep) no higher praise than to say it is a fitting end to it all. L. Sprague de Camp's "A Sending of Serpents" (F&SF Aug) concludes that the best way to get back at Synanon is to sic the Moonies on them. "C.O.D.", by Jonathan Milos (IASfm Aug), holds that the story of Noah's ark was basically true -- only the ark was a spaceship, and it wasn't Noah who got saved.

Ian Stewart's "The Malodorous Plutocrats" (ANALOG Sep) contains the further adventures of Billy the Goat, a fix-it man with the brains of Einstein and the instincts of a street brawler. And the idea of going back in time to visit Shakespeare is finally done to a hilarious death in "The Merchant of Stratford", by Frank Ramirez (IASfm July); after all Shakespeare was a businessman first and foremost, and there's a bundle to be made off time travelers.

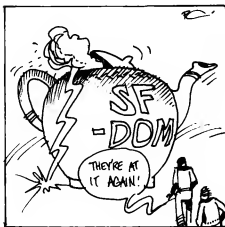
COMING UNGLUED

I saved one of the best for last. Juleen Brantingham's "Where Are You, Stephanie Tobin" (IASfm Aug) is a haunting story of a young woman who begins to feel like a missing person in her own life, only to discover that she is absolutely right. She has come unglued from her own timeline, and the effect on her is at once great pain and immense relief.

I am also coming unglued. You see, Dick Geis has foolish notions that he has to save room in SFR for something besides my column. But every issue my column grows. Well, it's Dick's own fault for going quarterly, so I have to choose among many more stories for each column. And I could also make the column shorter and keep a clear conscience if only the writers in our beloved field would stop writing so many good and almost-good stories. Maybe next time I'll make the word limit and maybe Santa will come down the chimney, Dick, and give you a neat electric train.

STORIES REVIEWED THIS ISSUE:

Following a reader's recommendation, I am listing the stories by the issue of the magazine they appeared in, for easy finding. I also put * an asterisk by the stories that I thought were outstanding -- these are the ones that I am also recommending for the Nebula ballot.



ANALOG

(July) Michael Bishop, "A Few Last Words for the Late Immortals"

- * (Aug) Edward Bryant, "giANTS"; Stephen Tall, "Home is the Hunter" (Sep) Edward A. Byers, "A Far and Foreign Shore"; Dean R. Lamber, "Damn Shame"; Ian Stewart, "The Malodorous Plutocrats"

(Oct) Jayge Carr, "In Adam's Fall"; * W.T. Quick, "Instructions Enclosed"; Mack Reynolds, "The Case of the Disposable Jalopy"

ASIMOV'S SF ADVENTURE MAGAZINE

- * (Fall) John Brunner, "The Things That Are Gods"; Barry Longyear, "The Starshow: The Last Show on Earth & Follow the Red Wagons"



DESTINIES

- * (Aug-Sep) Fred Saberhagen, "Some Events in the Templar Radiant"; Charles Sheffield, "Skystalk"

FANTASY & SCIENCE FICTION

- (Aug) Richard Cowper, "Out There Where the Big Ships Go"; L. Sprague de Camp, "A Sending of Serpents"; Raylyn Moore, "Standoff"; * Alan Ryan, "You're Welcome! Said the Robot!"; * Michael Shea, "Angel of Death"; George Zebrowski, "The World Sweep"
- * (Sep) Neal Barrett, Jr., "Hero"; Gary Jennings, "Ignis Fatuus"; Bob Leman, "Change of Address"; Joanna Russ, "The Extraordinary Voyages of Amelie Bertrand"; Donnell Stern, "Reunion"; * William Walling, "Triggerman"

GALAXY

- * (39:10) David Bunch, "When the Metal Eaters Came"; Jesse Peel, "Star Warriors"

GALILEO

- (July) George Florance-Guthridge, "Jaharratta Dki"; D.C. Poyer, "Universal Soldier"; * Connie Willis, "Homing Pigeon" (Sep) D.C. and Lin Poyer, "Silent Trade"; * Mary Schaub, "Court of the Time-sifters"

ISAC ASIMOV'S SCIENCE FICTION MAGAZINE

- * (July) Joseph Kosiewski, "The Quintessence of Galahad Sypher"; Barry B. Longyear, "Priest of the Baraboo"; Frank Ramirez, "The Merchant of Stratford"
- * (Aug) Juleen Brantingham, "Where Are You, Stephanie Tobin"; Barry B. Longyear, "Dreams"; Jonathan Milos, "C.O.D."; Frederick Pohl, "The Cool War" (Sep) Isaac Asimov, "The Backward Look"; * Barry B. Longyear, "Enemy Mine"; Steve Perry & Jesse Peel, "Solo"

OMNI

- (July) John Keefauver, "The Rocks That Moved"; John Morressey, "The Empath and the Savages"
- * (Aug) George R.R. Martin, "Sand-kings"; John Anthony West, "The Fox and the Hedgehog" (Sep) Ben Bova, "Kinsman"; Edward H. Gandy, "Graveside Watch"

SMALL PRESS NOTES

BY THE EDITOR

YE OLDE POLICY RESTATEMENT

Small Press Notes is so titled because this is not a review column. I decide to note or mention or review or comment upon a given small press item or issue on a strictly arbitrary basis and roughly on whether or not I think it might be of interest to the readers of SFR. I'll likely note exceptional work of one kind or another.

I don't "owe" anybody a review or note unless I promise one (and remember the promise).

These notes are short and to the point. Pithy, I like to think. "Pissy" others like to think.

Please don't write and complain to me that I was too general and non-specific in a given mention of your publication, and should have mentioned your interview with God and Mao, plus the article on "Sf and the Coming Alien Invasion."

That isn't productive. It only gets my stubborn bone to aching, and sometimes my claws unsheath, and....

Onward.

NEVER LOOK BACK UNTIL YOU FEEL HOT
BREATH ON THE BACK OF YOUR NECK.

FANTASY #3--THE FANTASY ARTIST'S
NETWORK MAGAZINE
POB 5157, Sherman Oaks, CA 91413.
\$1.50.

A good display for better sf and fantasy artists of almost-or-just-beginning professional skills. Profiles and art tips, discussions of the business side of an art career. Very valuable. I would suggest the publishers offer to sell pages to artists for display of their wares or competency, since I would think many artists cannot see display in the usual editorial selection process, given the quarterly schedule and limited pages.

YE OLDE POLICY EXPLAINED FURTHER

I'll probably only list a single issue price--the cost of the single issue of a given zine I'm mentioning--in the belief that if a reader orders the issue I've noted, he or she will then, if pleased, subscribe for a year or so. I don't like the idea of SFR readers subbing long term on the basis of my few words here. Pay for a single issue, and then if you want to buy a sub, fine.



I am leery of young or inexperienced fan publishers trying to plunge too fast, too far into the deep waters of fanzines and books.

It is very easy to advertise, to acquire a subscription list of two or three hundred... and then discover you don't have time for it all, or don't really like it all that much, or that the cash flow doesn't keep up with expenses and you can't afford to make up the difference, and you've spent the subscription moneys and are faced with maybe \$1,000.00 in obligations....

After a generation or so in this fanzine publishing game, I'd prefer it if beginning fanzine and book publishers sold their products on a one-issue-in-advance only basis. It reduces the risks for everyone.

QUANTUM JUMP--ANSWER TO THE UFO MYSTERY by Peter Simon.
The Peters Press, POB 752, Houlton, ME 04730. \$2. (1979)

This booklet is written in a breezy, conversational style and boils down, long-windedly, to the assertion that the universe is a live-and-God, the occult, the supernatural, psi phenomena, and UFO phenomena are false beliefs and anybody who thinks otherwise is a victim of 'mental limits.'

No proof is offered. There's a bit more to it than that, but I don't think you want to hear about it.

EMPIRE SCIENCE FICTION # 16
P.O. Box 967, New Haven, CT 06504.
\$1.50. Edited and published by Mark J. McGarry.

Devoted to the art and craft of writing s-f, with interesting and info-laden contributions by John Shirley, Pamela Sargent, Darrell Schweitzer, others. Interesting

feature is a piece of fiction by an amateur which is then critiqued by Gene Wolf, A.D. Wallace and L. Kathryn Jackson.

EMPIRE has been cut to 20 pages, and mailed sans envelopes. Cover is the contents page.

THRUST #13

11919 Barrel Cooper Court, Reston, VA 22091. \$1.50.

Lots of controversial goodies in this zine. Editor Doug Fratz has learned to pick and choose his columnists for variety and points of view. He handles the zine well, and has, this issue, gone to book paper from newsprint, and has his usual good-looking two-color cover. A pro-looking zine, packed with professional and fan writers who will raise your eyebrows and make you think. I always look forward to the latest John Shirley outrage, the latest Ted White mortal wound, the latestTempest in the letter section....

FRITZ LEIBER: A BIBLIOGRAPHY

1934 - 1979. COMPILED BY CHRIS MORGAN. \$3.00 or £1.50.
Chris Morgan, 39 Hollibrow, Selly Oak, Birmingham B29 4LX, England.

A handsome and worthwhile effort. Offset, booklet format, 40 pages, with listings of all Fritz's sf and fantasy work in every media. The complete Index is invaluable.

FANTARAMA #10-11

11220 Bird Road, Richmond, B.C. V6X 1N8 CANADA. \$1.25.

Letter-size offset zine devoted to sf, fantasy and comic art, with the emphasis on comic or graphic art. Major article on science fiction comics, interviews with Will Eisner, a Jack Vance section on his works and a speech by him and a Q & A section.

Most notable and valuable section is the Fan Central 16-page information/listing of seemingly every fanzine (comic and sf), every convention, and the Lulu Review which reviews very honestly about 25 zines of various hues and inter-ests. This 72-page zine is a must and a bargain.

THE NATIONAL FANTASY FAN VOL. 39, #45
Owen K. Laurion, 1609 Roma Av., NE Albuquerque, NM 87106. \$1.00

New editor, new problems, some disorganization... That's standard for the TNFF, the main publication of The National Fantasy Fan Federation.

The zine and the organization is for first-entry into sf fandom,

I'd say. It provides all kinds of addresses, orientation, services, opportunities.

NEW WORLDS

U.S. Distributor: Patchin Productions, 56 MacDougal St., New York, NY 10012. \$2.00

Charles Platt usually sends me a copy of the latest NW, sure I'll hate it.

And I do, for reasons he will not accept, I suppose. I love the satirical, vicious, mocking contents. I even like the scattergun disorganization.

What I HATE is the anti-reader contempt implicit in the lack of a contents page, and the lack of page numbers. Hell, I can't even find a price on the magazine, or an address of the publisher! That's caring casualness and anti-discipline too far!

This issue (unnumbered, of course!) has an absolutely devastating review of Samuel R. Delany's EMPIRE and of his writing skills in general. The article was unsigned, but it has the overstatement and knife-in-the-guts style of Charles Platt.

Charles, the editor, even honored me by quoting my feelings about writing porno; I'm not sure if he approves or is agast:

GEIS ON ETHICS

I always tried to write sex scenes that would make me want to jack off, and (if jacking off) would make my pleasure more intense. I think that is an honorable and ethical position, and I'd be writing sex novels today if there was a decent-paying market for them.

---SFR #29

I placed a purely arbitrary \$2. price on this issue, if you'd like a copy of NW. I hope Patchin Productions will honor it.

A MEAL OF FABLE (In 3 Volumes)

By Harry Warner, Jr.
Fanhistorica Press, POB 1343, Radio City Station, New York, NY 10019.
(Write for price)

Years ago Harry Warner wrote a best-selling (in fandom) history of science fiction fandom during the 1940s, titled ALL OUR YESTERDAYS.

He became the fan historian. And he promised a volume of fan history covering the 50's. He completed the ms., had trouble with the publisher, yanked the ms., and now, a few years later, we have a really fine three-volume mimeographed edition of the work.

There are a total of 100 complimentary reviews and 1000 retail copies in this limited edition.

As Joe Siclari, the publisher, rightfully says, these mimeographed

sets are collector's items. Eventually there will be a hardcover edition (as there was for ALL OUR YESTERDAYS). But these mimeo volumes are so pure fanish, so right, that in my mind the mimeo edition is preferable.

We have here an introduction by Wilson (Bob) Tucker (and he wrote the intro to ALL OUR YESTERDAY, too), and we have a fine fanish cover by Ross Chamberlain, and above all we have the fine anecdotal, story-telling history by Harry Warner. All the fan projects, trends, personalities, conventions, feuds, rivalries, scandals...all come alive here.

Believe me, the world of sf fandom in the 1950s will amaze, absorb, astound, appall....

I was in it and a part of it. I still don't believe it.

TESSERAFT has not moved. Only the former editor has moved. So all TESSERAFT mail should go to their new Chicago area address:

Robert T. Garcia
Tesseract, Inc.
707 S. Harvey
Oak Park, IL 60304

Robert Garcia also edits and publishes THE CHICAGO FANTASY NEWS-LETTER, a bi-monthly 12-pager. 60¢.

TEDDY HARVIA (SEE ILL0) IS A HOAX.

So confessed David Thayer, the perpetrator of this heinous crime. In his one-shot, ANAGRAM, Thayer confessed further that he is also "Miranda Thomson."

Shock waves rippled through fandom as this news broke over us in sheets of incredulity. Fan editors by the score, fooled, victimized, muttered dire threats. Richard Geis, prominent fan editor, muttered of Thayer, "I'm not surprised. Any man or artist who is capable of as many pun cartoons as he is plainly capable of this sort of stunt!"

The hoax is two years old, David Thayer revealed, and began because he wanted his fanzine, NEBULOUSFAN, to appear to have more than one contributor.

"Guilty of an insecure ego," growled the infamous Alter-Ego. "No fan should have to lean on a phony entity for egoboo and a sick, secret sense of superiority."

We print Thayer's address below to give outraged fans an opportunity to vent spleen.

David Thayer
7209 DeVille Dr.,
Fort Worth, TX 76118.

TODAY IS THE TOMORROW WE WORRIED
ABOUT YESTERDAY---WITH GOOD CAUSE!

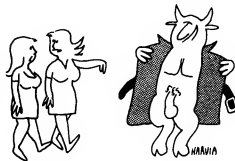
THE FIFTH BOOK OF VIRGIL FINLAY
Edited and published by Gerry de la Ree, 7 Cedarwood Lane, Saddle River, NJ 07458. \$15.75

There seems to be no end to the buyers' lusts for quality reproductions of Finlay's work. This volume is subtitled, "THE WEIRD TALES YEARS" and contains work from 1935 ("Medusa" his first sale to WT) to 1954.

These reproductions are on slick paper, in a letter-size quality hardcover book, with dj, and introduction by de la Ree, who is an expert on Finlay's life and works. Virgil Finlay died of cancer in January, 1971.

THE ANTI-FUN, ANTI-PLEASURE,
ANTI-LIFE TENETS OF THE PUR-
ITAN (SIN-GUILT-PUNISHMENT)
CHARACTER/PHILOSOPHY ARE A FACADE
BEHIND WHICH LURK THE UNADMIT-
TED MONSTERS ENVY AND INFERIORITY

---ALTER EGO



Never mind him. He's just
a flashin' Pan.

CANNED MEAT

A SCIENCE FICTION NOVEL
BY RICHARD E. GEIS

Life in a computer-run domed city and the falling civilization of which it is a part.

Roi and Eelia, two young citizens of the dome, two children of Great Mother Computer, meet and experiment with forbidden sex.

Covers and interior illustrations by Bruce Conklin
\$5.

Order from:
Science Fiction Review
POB 11408
Portland, OR 97211

OTHER VOICES, OTHER VOICES, OTHER VOICES, OTHER

THE AMERICAN MONOMYTH

By Robert Jewett and

John Shelton Lawrence

Anchor Press/Doubleday, 263 pp.

With illustrations

Foreword by Isaac Asimov

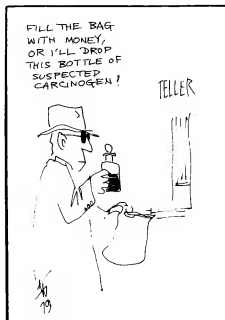
Reviewed by someone who neglected to put his name on the review and whom I can't recall. --REG

A community in a harmonious paradise is threatened by evil: normal institutions fail to contend with this threat: a selfless superhero emerges to renounce temptations (especially sexual) and carry out the redemptive task: aided by fate, his decisive victory restores the community to its paradisaical condition: the superhero then recedes into obscurity. (p. xx)

Sound familiar? It should, since authors Jewett and Lawrence have perceived it to be a basic theme running through much of American popular culture as manifested in movies, TV, comic books and other forms of popular fiction and have given it the name which serves as this book's title. The authors find such trends highly disturbing and view them as a threat to America's democratic ideals.

Many educated persons hold that popular culture as a whole is nothing more than a trivial harmless diversion, unworthy of serious examination. The authors call this attitude the bubble-gum fallacy, which "suggests that popular culture, while powerfully influential in benign areas of behavior, lacks the power to corrupt and destroy -- an obvious contradiction". (p. 4) In contrast the authors feel that a close, sober examination of popular culture can cast a highly revealing light on the American character.

What makes this book relevant to the readers of this magazine lies in the fact that the first two chapters are devoted to the STAR TREK TV series and the more devoted elements in STAR TREK fandom. The authors contend that the show's more fanatical devotees have turned the series and its mystique into a secular religion. Even though many STAR TREK episodes show a surface hostility toward myth and superstition and a bias in favor of rationalism (Spock's "logic"), Jewett and Lawrence contend that the show evokes unconscious mythical yearnings on the part of the viewer. The authors label this paradox the myth of mythlessness.



ness: "the unexamined belief that scientific culture has transcended mythical forms of thought" (p. 250). STAR TREK's creators went to great lengths to give the show an aura of scientific realism and verisimilitude (dubbed the "Believability Factor" by Gene Roddenberry) especially in the scenes aboard the ENTERPRISE. But to Jewett and Lawrence such attention to detail merely cloaks STAR TREK's mythic content: "Instead of a rigorously self-critical scientific outlook, STAR TREK offers pseudo-empiricism: an empirical veneer of gadgetry and crew talk applied to a mythical superstructure". (p. 19)

STAR TREK shows its mythic content through three patterns which run through almost every episode. The first pattern is the saga "which features a protagonist journeying to unknown and dangerous regions, undergoing trials to test his strength and wit". (p. 12) In stories reflecting the American monomorph such a journey usually takes the form of a search for evil and its elimination or destruction when found. The saga pattern forms the unspoken premise requiring Captain Kirk to needlessly and illogically expose himself to great personal danger in many episodes.

The second pattern is sexual renunciation in which the hero must resist sexual temptations for the sake of his crusade against evil. Thus Kirk must renounce his numerous romantic involvements for the sake of his mission. His real marriage is to the ENTERPRISE. Such a

pattern is even more apparent in the character of Spock, who has apparently purged all sexual feelings from his personality: "Sex is an autonomous force here, distinct from Spock's personality and capable of destroying his ability to reason. Since he cannot integrate it with his personality, it must be rigidly suppressed until it overpowers him in rutting season". (p. 14)

The third pattern is redemption: a selfless crusading to rescue others from evil. In STAR TREK such evil often takes the form of a psychological or spiritual tyranny by undesirable beliefs as well as that of an external menace. Such an idealistic crusade often results in the violation of established law or custom such as the ENTERPRISE's "non interference directive".

Based on their extensive reading in STAR TREK fan literature, especially the fan-written anthology STAR TREK LIVES!, Jewett and Lawrence conclude that STAR TREK arouses religious feelings (directed toward a secular object) among its more ardent devotees. They give numerous colorful examples from both fan literature and behavior to support this. "There is a reality in the STAR TREK fantasy that transcends petty problems, and it thus provides a means of salvation... a pop theology has emerged which elaborates and explains the assumptions and experience of STAR TREK faith... strikingly similar to the growth of apocryphal literature in the Biblical tradition". (pp. 20 & 30)

The authors have labelled such behavior the Werther effect: a "voluntary behavior alteration produced by interaction with a powerful artifact of popular culture". (p. 36) "Werther" refers to the novel THE SORROWS OF THE YOUNG WERTHER by Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe which produced the same popular reaction in the late 18th century which STAR TREK does today. Many young people imitated the book's hero to the point, in some cases, of imitating his fictional suicide.

Among the precepts of the STAR TREK faith are a spirit of love and fellowship with other fans, an innocent optimism in the ultimate triumph of the "American Way of Life" throughout the universe, and the belief that STAR TREK is "a staggering ly effective model for dealing with deep human questions" (according to one fan writer). Overall there is

a blurring of the boundary between fantasy and reality.

The popular adulation for Spock and Leonard Nimoy is well known. "Spock is perceived as a god, which matches the requirements of the mythic pattern, namely that without a superhuman agency of some sort, there is no true redemption". (p.16) Such admiration often takes on a sexual nature on the part of female fans. "Many of the (fan-written) stories featuring Spock remind one very much of the ancient mystery religions in which union with the god provides the ecstatic high point of the ritual...STAR TREK LIVES! reports that a 'favorite theme is the "no strings attached" meeting of his peculiarly urgent need.'" (p.33)

Captain Kirk is similarly revered: "If Spock has displaced God, it is Kirk who plays the role of a Christ without passion and in this role he, more than Spock, consistently appears as a superhuman redeemer". (p. 27)

Gene Roddenberry is somewhat appalled by such a response to this creation: "I'm not a guru and I don't want to be... It frightens me when I learn of 10,000 people reading a STAR TREK script as if it were scripture. I certainly didn't write scripture". (p. 229)

All of the foregoing is only the briefest sampling of the flavor and insight of the book's first two chapters. The authors develop their thesis with great depth and coherence, all the while maintaining high readability. In the remainder of the book Jewett and Lawrence turn their scrutiny to such topics as Charles Bronson movies, Buffalo Bill, LITTLE HOUSE ON THE PRAIRIE, the movie JAWS, PLAYBOY Magazine, Walt Disney Productions and many other examples of American popular culture. The book never fails to be stimulating and penetrating.

Jewett and Lawrence conclude the acceptance of the American Monomyth leads to a passive "spectator" society which looks for salvation from and gives excessive power to larger-than-life redeemers. The end result is a betrayal of all the values and ideals of democracy.

Despite their conclusions, Jewett and Lawrence are not in favor of censorship. Rather, they propose a campaign to educate the mass audience in the existence of the American Monomyth and the subtle techniques used to impress it on the viewer. Thus one might acquire the sophistication needed for resisting its assaults.

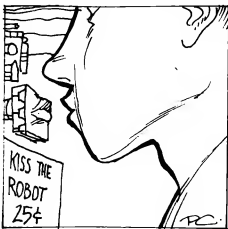
In sum, THE AMERICAN MONOMYTH is a unique look at American culture.

THE ULTIMATE ENEMY
By Fred Saberhagen
Ace Paperback, 242 pp., \$1.95
Reviewed by Neal Wilgus

There's a certain irony in having a Saberhagen book titled THE ULTIMATE ENEMY, for he seems unable to invent real villains. He has created a fascinating planet/world in THE VEILS OF AZLAROC, a unique future history in EMPIRE OF THE EAST, even a charming and sympathetic Dracula in THE HOLMES-DRAQUILA FILE and AN OLD FRIEND OF THE FAMILY -- but nowhere have his "enemies" been particularly convincing.

THE ULTIMATE ENEMY is a collection of nine Berserker stories from the late 1960s and mid-70s and, of course, it's the Berserkers who are supposed to be that "ultimate enemy". Alas, the killer machines rarely come through as more than paper tigers and in these stories they seem to be there mainly as threats to motivate the main characters (Saberhagen is short on "heros" too) who are faced with problems that must be solved. Significantly, the least effective story in the collection is the one in which the Berserker manages to win for a change.

None of these stories are strikingly original or moving, but all are enjoyable and interesting and if you've read the rest of the Berserker saga you'll want to have this title too, for completeness if nothing else. Not Saberhagen at his best but still mildly recommendable.



CASTLE ROOGNA
By Piers Anthony
Del Rey, 1979, 329 pp., \$1.95
Reviewed by William Glass

Piers Anthony's A SPELL FOR CHAMELEON and THE SOURCE OF MAGIC, his first two novels about the magical land of Xanth, were the most entertaining and fun novels he'd

done in years. Now we have CASTLE ROOGNA. And this third Xanth novel is even more fun than its predecessors.

This time the focus shifts from Bink (whose quests for his own unique magical Talent and for the source of Xanth's magic filled the first two books) to Dor, Bink's Magician-class son, born offstage during Bink's second quest.

Dor's Talent, an ability to converse with inanimate objects, is so flexible and pervasive that he is being groomed to become King Magician steps down. Dor's problem is that he is twelve years old, teased for being "the dope who talks to chairs". He daydreams of being a bully-proofed strong-thewed adult, and is of an age when he is becoming all too self-conscious of the Talent of Millie, his nursemaid, a former ghost made alive and whole by his father. (And whose Talent is sex appeal.)

Dor's restlessness is channelled into a quest -- a quest to find a way to restore to life and wholeness the zombie, Jonathan whom Millie loved during the eight centuries of her death. And loves still.

The key to Jonathan's restoration lies eight hundred years in the past, so Dor finds himself spellbound through a magic tapestry to the time of Castle Roogna's building, his mind projected into the warrior body of one of the wave of barbarians then breaking through from Mundania into Xanth. In his new adult (yet twelve-year-old) stature, Dor is confronted by harpies and goblins, caught up in the magical conflict between King Roogna and the Magician Murphy, companioned by a giant spider, and confounded by the fully functioning Talent of the then-still-alive Millie.

Anthony is clearly having fun. His wordplay shades from the cockeyed literal (shoes are plucked from shoe-trees, milk gotten from milkweds) through the off-handedly excruciating (the castle ghosts are rather shy and "easily spooked") to the openly satirical (as in Dor's rather harrowing battle with the uncontrollable Gerrymander).

This is whimsical, rigorously-consistent fantasy, like that encouraged by John W. Campbell in the pages of UNKNOWN WORLDS in the early 1940s (and best practiced there by L. Sprague de Camp, with and without the collaboration of Fletcher Pratt).

At the same time CASTLE ROOGNA is also constantly (if entertainingly) didactic, in something like Heinlein's SF juveniles of the 1950s.

Dor is clearly the naive Heinlein youth, his quest their usual one for competence and maturity -- even if it is complicated by tritons, dragons, ogres, zombies, and tangle trees, gorgons and the like; and even if the older, Heinlein competent man character is a very intelligent, highly magnified spider.

CASTLE ROOQNA, and all Anthony's Xanth novels, are good fun reads. He says this one is the last of a trilogy, but I want more. So will you.

ALICIA II

By Robert Thurston
Berkley/Putnam 1978, 419 pp., \$10.95
ISBN: 399-12219-2

Reviewed by Ronald R. Lambert

The time is many centuries hence, and the hero is a "retread" -- a person who has had his "soul" transferred to a new young body. This sort of thing is common -- at least for those judged "satisfactory" for receiving the boon of potential immortality. The problem, and the cause for the social dilemma that energizes the whole story, is that the new young bodies are supplied by "rejects" -- those who flunk a special I.Q./Aptitude test administered universally.

The hero -- a satisfyingly heroic hero -- has a special problem: His new body was sabotaged by its previous possessor so that although he has the build of an Adonis, he is totally impotent. In compensation he spends a period of his new life as a reckless adventurer in deep space, earning a reputation for being a hero that makes him a pivotal figure in various intrigues involving the "reject" rebel underground once he returns to Earth.

The rebels offer him the prospect of an operation which might cure his impotence and enable him to have more than a merely Platonic relationship with the woman he loves (Alicia II). He does not like the idea of making the required deal with the rebels, but Alicia II, who loves him as much as he loves her, is herself a member of the rebel underground, and helps to persuade him.

This is an exciting, action-packed story set against the background of a well-developed culture, with strikingly unique, well-drawn characters. It contains profound thoughts and perturbing questions too, for those of us who appreciate having their minds boggled by situations in which there is a clearcut good or evil side in a social conflict, where genocide might be the

lesser of two evils, where people who are already dead can be killed worse, where doctrines like elitism can be insidious and very painful to deal with.

DESTINATION: VOID

By Frank Herbert
Revised Edition 1978
Berkley Books, 276 pp., \$1.95

Reviewed by Neal Wilgus

"Where we made our first mistake", said Bickel as he spliced more Eng multiplier circuits into the computer auxiliary he called the Ox, "was way back before the Organic Mental Cores went haywire and we had to put them out of their misery".

From her cocoon couch at the big board of Earthling's Com-Central, Prudence wondered if Bickel had finally hit on the unique combination that would allow them to turn on the artificial intelligence that alone could save their skins. Did he know they were all asleep? She was stoned out of her gourd.

"God works mysterious ways", Flattery said as he secretly stroked the kill-ship trigger. "It's almost eerie how close this DESTINATION: VOID scenario resembles that ancient fable called 2001. An exploratory spaceship on the outer reaches of the solar system; a fantastic computer developing 'rogue consciousness'; the relentless approach of an expanded level of awareness. And yet how different the situations really are ..."

Timberlake blurted out, "But the colonists -- those thousands of frozen colonists stored away in the deep freeze. We've got to solve this damned artificial consciousness problem so the colonists can go on to their goal at Tau Ceti".

"But don't you see?" asked Bickel, always the organ of analysis. "We're all clones -- not clones of those supposed criminal elements who were genetically best for this mission. No, not that at all. The secret is, we're all clones of -- each other. That's why we're all so much alike!"

From her place deep in the shadow of the computer Mary Shelley said: "The Clones of Frankenstein."

THE EMPIRE OF TIME

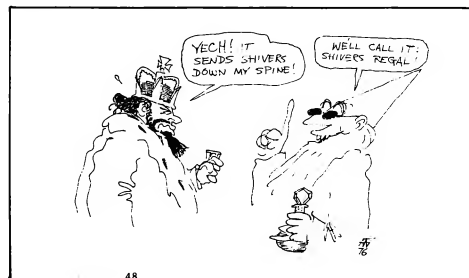
By Crawford Kilian
Del Rey, 1978, \$1.75 #27938

Reviewed by Tom Staicer

This excellent novel is by yet another Del Rey discovery, Crawford Kilian. This is his first SF novel and anyone can see reasons why he appears to have a bright future ahead of him. According to the biography page, he has written three non-SF books previously. This helps to explain his smooth, clean writing style.

On April 22, 2015, Domsday will happen to the Earth. This has been discovered by time probes sent into the future. Since any probe going into the cataclysm is destroyed, it is not possible to find out why, how or where the doom begins. Jerry Pierce, the Trainable hero (agent tested by the government and found to have time travel abilities) is sent on deadly missions to uncover and prevent the mysterious doom ahead.

Those who are not Trainables are the great unwashed and they resent it. Some become indentured servants or slaves sent by the busload to places in the past or future to do work which will benefit the government in its crash program to



force-feed technology and avert Doom-day.

Pierce is not all that happy with his life as it is when he finds that: 1) he is starting to experience brief but ominous "freezes" in which his aging body (in his 30s) is giving up its time travel powers. If the government leaders find out he will be killed, and 2) he has a bomb inserted surgically in his chest, set to be triggered by his own mind when he hears someone, somewhere say a trigger phrase to him. He doesn't know the phrase or who to avoid, of course.

Pierce is a sort of James Bond hero with flashes of Roger Zelazny's "Home is the Hangman" and several Van Vogt heroes thrown in. Kilian achieves a synthesis of influences rather than falling into a trap in which he picks up obvious SF clichés. He has blended wit, action and good character motivation along with sense of wonder and satire. All this in his first novel. What a burden he will have when he sets out to write his next novel!

JOURNEY

By Marta Randall
Pocket Books, \$1.95 81207

Reviewed by Michael Maida

On the front flap, Charles N. Brown (mistakenly referred to as N. Brown) is quoted as saying that JOURNEY is "the best original novel I've read so far this year." I'm not sure I'd agree, but certainly would if "new discovery" was substituted for "original novel".

JOURNEY is a portrait of the Kennerin family as they settle their planet, Aerie. Jason Kennerin, born into the wealthy upper class, has been banished from his world for marrying Mish, a commoner, and was given the title to Aerie. On this pleasant world, uninhabited by humans, the Kennerins start a family. The book begins with Jason bringing in a ship full of refugees from the planet NewHome. The novel encompasses a span of 20 years as the refugees' settlement takes root and the Kennerin children grow up.

This is primarily a novel about people and a very well written one. Especially memorable is the character of Hart, the youngest boy. Initially a precocious and sensitive child, he becomes withdrawn and paranoid after the many strangers invade his paradise. He becomes the "mad scientist" of the story. But Randall puts us inside his skull and we see him as a victim rather than a villain. She's got that way of presenting women and children authentically.

ically that I've only seen in other women writers; Kate Wilhelm, for example.

Besides the fine characterization, JOURNEY's other strong point is excellent use of SF elements as background rather than foreground. Things like tau (hyperspace) and cloning are in there, but Randall doesn't try to hit you on the head with them.

My only complaints are minor. Aerie's main export is, get this, a tree sap used for electrical wiring! Come on! Secondly, although Aerie is an alien, unterraformed world, its climate is ideal for humans and its ecology is perfectly safe. AND its native sentient marsupials are happy to act as servants to the Kennerins! Uh huh. Finally, the settlers mesh together too well, even for refugees. No group of homo sapiens can live together for 20 years without serious conflict. Despite these flaws, I found JOURNEY hard to put down, which says a lot for a book of 400-plus pages.

SKINNERBALL!!!

By Don Joseph
Hardcover, 273 pp., \$8.95
Vantage Press, 2140 E. Third St.
Tucson, AZ 85719

Reviewed by Neal Wilgus

Since Samuel Konkin III has described me as an ally of Robert Anton Wilson (NEW LIBERTARIAN WEEKLY #101), I suppose it's wrongheaded of me to turn around and label this book an imitation of Wilson and Shea's ILLUMINATUS! -- but I'm afraid that's what I have to do.

SKINNERBALL!!! is nothing approaching the scale and depth of ILLUMINATUS! but it is certainly derivative of the Wilson/Shea trilogy and in fact parts of it are almost unintelligible without a knowledge of the Wilson/Shea work. And it should be noted right off the bat that SKINNERBALL!!! adds next to nothing to our knowledge or understanding of the Bavarian Illuminati and all the conspiracy paranoia associated with it. Despite the long introspective section in which the term "skinnerball" is coined, nothing much comes of this reshuffling of Illuminati theories.

What SKINNERBALL!!! doesn't lift from the Wilson/Shea, it seems to be borrowing from Robert Heinlein, although Heinlein is nowhere mentioned or quoted directly. Alas, if it is Heinlein that Don Joseph is imitating, it's works like I WILL FEAR NO EVIL and TIME ENOUGH FOR

LOVE rather than his earlier, less preachy books. In any case, SKINNERBALL!!! drowns in the same kind of endless conversation and impossible sex that plagues the later Heinlein -- Joseph even going Heinlein one better in the incest department.

The actual story content, though sometimes spiritedly told, is negligible -- Dr. Adam Loons, a rich Tucson psychiatrist, is on the track of the mysterious Bavarian Illuminati and hoping to combat them with a secret organization of his own, while in the background the Illuminati are apparently scouting him out in turn. Don Joseph is an anagram fan (Roosevelt/sole voter) and deviser of acronyms such as T.H.E.M. (They Have Everything Made) and the reader is never in doubt that he is in the hands of a clever literary intelligence. Unfortunately this cleverness doesn't do much to move the story along and in fact the story mostly sits idle while Joseph indulges himself with trifles.

Apparently there will be a SKINNERBALL!!! II and maybe even III in which the weak story started in this first volume will have a chance to come to life. Based on the evidence so far, the chances are they will be stillborn. This is unfortunate since Joseph shows signs of being an interesting writer if he'll put ILLUMINATUS! aside and strike out on his own.

Recommended for Illuminati buffs and completists only.

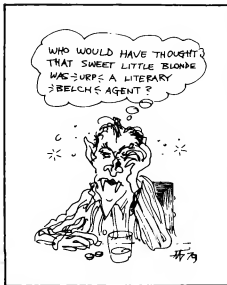
DRACULA IN LOVE

By John Shirley
Zebra Books, 283 pp., 1979, \$1.95

Reviewed by William Gibson

Housewives who take John Shirley's second novel home for the fanged Travolta figure on the cover, anticipating an evening's Gothic with mild S/M overtones, are in for an ugly surprise. Funny, if your taste runs to l'humour noir, but ugly. The book moves as though Terry Southern had stripped a vintage Dennis Wheatley for drag racing, while its unevenness of tone suggests what might happen if John Waters' (PINK FLAMINGOS) were hired by Hammer Films but forced to work with a young director who insisted on drawing earnest parallels between rape, fascism and vampirism.

The plot is a patchwork Frankenstein's-neck of vampires lashed to recycled Theosophical software, a California "rape epidemic" sutured into a computer conspiracy out of



THE MAN FROM U.N.C.L.E., Brazilian fascists stitched cheek-by-jowl with Mansonoid cultists, and blood-crazed zombies twisted into the fabric wherever space allows. The resulting construction is smeared over with liberal dollops of ultraviolence, much of it sexual, and careens along the twisting track of Shirley's story-line at top speed, spraying blood and shreds of decaying flesh at every switchback curve. When it falters, it seems to do so because the author has suddenly had some intimation of just how depraved, of just how much fun, this is all starting to be. Then the earnest young director rushes onto the set and calls for some seriousness.

I was disappointed by the mail-order Rosicrucian machinery dragged on at the end to suck Dracula into some higher sphere, where at last he will be able to purge his evil on some kind of karmic hamster-wheel. Shirley's Dracula is akin to Lautremont's MALDOROR and Jarry's UBU, in that he appeals to the demonic adolescent in all of us, and I hated to see him so readily absorbed into the tidy wheels-within-wheels of an occult bureaucracy.

SELECTED SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY STORIES

By Jack London

Fictioneer Books, Ltd., Lakemont,
GA, 30552

Hardcover, 120 pp., \$8.50

Reviewed by Neal Wilgus

In his introduction to this volume Dick Weideman makes the incredible comment that this is "the first anthology of Jack London's fantasy and science fiction stories ever compiled". Unfortunately, for Weideman and Fictioneer Books, this

is not the case. Gregg Press published THE SCIENCE FICTION OF JACK LONDON edited by Richard Gid Powers (hardcover, \$15.00) in 1975 -- the same year that Kennikat Press brought out CURIOUS FRAGMENTS: JACK LONDON'S TALES OF FANTASY FICTION edited by Dale L. Walker (hardcover, estimated \$15.00), with a preface by Philip Jose Farmer.

Even more unfortunate for Fictioneer's, Weideman's introduction refers to London's "Goliath" and "A Curious Fragment" as his most important SF stories, yet neither are included in the Fictioneer's edition, while both are in the Gregg and Kennikat collections. And to top it all, four of the five stories in the Fictioneer's collection are also in the 12-story Gregg collection and all of them are in the 15-story Kennikat collection, all three containing the powerful "The Red One", one of London's best stories.

So if you are a London fancier your choice between the three collections will probably have to be based on price more than anything else. Fictioneer's SELECTED SF AND FANTASY STORIES is graced with some impressive story illustrations by Philip Craig Russell and that goes some way toward making this volume more attractive, since CURIOUS FRAGMENTS has no illustrations, while THE SF OF JACK LONDON, which consists of photographic reprints of the original book version texts, has illos only for the short novel THE SCARLET PLAGUE. But with the Gregg Press collection running better than twice the stories at less than twice the price, and the Kennikat collection running three times the stories and matching Gregg's price, it's hard to maintain that the Fictioneer's title is the best buy.

Competing collections aside, Jack London's SF is surprisingly good and ought to be better known to today's SF readers. An inexpensive paperback edition of one of these titles is very much in order. With the flood of new and reprint material growing ever larger, I'm surprised there isn't already one on the stands.

THE OUTCASTS OF HEAVEN BELT

By Joan D. Vinge

Signet Paperback, Dec. 1978, \$1.75

Reviewed by Robert Frazier

Attempting to establish trade, the starship Ranger enters the Heaven Belt star system after a long journey from its home world. No longer man's most successful colon-

ization, the Heaven system has recently degenerated to the very edge of collapse. One of the broken system's colony factions senselessly attacks the ship, killing five of its seven member crew. Her ship important to her home world, the surviving captain, Betha Torgussen, attempts to secure a hydrogen refueling for a return trip amidst the intricate scheming and intrigue of the different Belt powers, governmental and corporate. She needs all her wits and wiles to maintain control of her ship, an unparalleled prize that all want, and she accepts some unlikely allies in the form of an emotionally-troubled couple who scavenge the system and a foppish government negotiator for the system's most well-to-do world, not yet desperate. Betha hijacks fuel and tries to escape the system, but the factional cold war over possession of the Ranger comes to a red-hot head; the ship and crew face destruction.

The initial section of THE OUTCASTS OF HEAVEN BELT focuses the reader in on the story like a zoom lens, and the immediate transition into a high tension plot situation is a smooth one. The subsequent introduction of characters and the increase in complexity of the human, social and political climate of the book all move just as swiftly and as coolly. The result is a coherent, tense, adeptly crafted story that reads quickly, powerfully and satisfyingly. My only quail with Joan is in the richness of her form. The story seems like a person that needs just a bit more flesh on them to be in perfect fitness. What is most impressive to me is the counterpoint between the stark, realistic science used and the deep, real human characterizations. It is no mean feat to be strong in both these areas within a single SF piece. Was it this two-edged focus, or the necessities of writing a magazine serial, that revented the author from seeing a need for a fuller background, a fuller body? This is hard to discern. However, a figure that is somewhat gaunt, yet full of vibrant life, can be an electrifying and compelling individual. THE OUTCASTS OF HEAVEN BELT is such a being.

This is easily one of the finer novels of '78, and certainly the major serial; this is identical to the ANALOG Feb.-April version. I believe that ANALOG has a policy of publishing their strongest serial of the year first, thus giving it the longest exposure for award considerations. One major character, Wadie Abdhiamal, was previously developed in Vinge's novelette "Media Man", ANALOG, October, '76, and she evidently intends

to expand the textus of this future history; she is presently developing a sequel to "Media Man". Her two ventures there so far have been superior work, and I look forward to more; and especially to her long, richly painted novel, *THE SNOW QUEEN*, coming from Dell, probably in early '80. With barely a handful of stories in as many years, Joan D. Vinge has proven to be one of SF's most ample talents. This first novel of hers stands up well; a fair barometer.

INSIDE -- OUTSIDE

By Philip Jose Farmer
Berkley Paperback, 169 pp., \$1.75

Reviewed by Neal Wilgus

This is a reissue of Philip Jose Farmer's grizzly little tale of life in a unique version of Hell, which has been published in 1964. Jack Cull (jackal), a sexy lady and a character that's supposed to be Fyodor Dostoevsky but comes out more like Mr. Natural, are caught up in a revolution that literally sweeps Hell off its foundations.

Fast paced and gripping despite plenty of "theological" small talk between Cull and Fyodor, Farmer's short novel starts out as pure fantasy but ends up science fiction if you can buy the all-powerful pseudo-science that's revealed in the end. Jack Cull is convincing enough and Fyodor is an amusing cartoon, but the sexy lady is so nondescript as to be nonexistent. Too bad Farmer didn't make her at least as real as Cull -- if he had this would be an outstanding novel rather than just above average.

Nevertheless, it's a good read.

QUEST OF THE THREE WORLDS

By Cordwainer Smith
Del Rey/Ballantine Books, 1978
184 pp., \$1.75

Reviewed by Lee Weinstein

Cordwainer Smith was the pseudonym for Dr. Paul M.A. Linebarger, a political scientist who was the godson of Sun Yat Sen, and who served as advisor to President Kennedy. As a science fiction writer he was one of the true innovators. Between about 1950 and his death in 1966 he wrote some thirty stories including a novel. Collectively, they constitute an immense fragmented vision of an incredible future history. Many are told as legend and folklore as though seen from the viewpoint of an even more remote future.

This is the third Smith book to be brought out by Ballantine in the past few years, following *NORSTRILIA* and *THE BEST OF CORDWAINER SMITH*. This marks its first publication since the 1966 Ace edition, and it has a new, informative introduction by J.J. Pierce. The book itself consists of one long story and three short ones set at the most distant-point of Smith's future (about 16,000 A.D.). The stories follow in sequence the exploits of Cashier O'Neill, nephew of the deposed ruler of the planet Mizzer. He wanders through space, seeking the means to overthrow the tyrant, Colonel Wedder, and liberate his people.

It is impossible to describe a Smith story and do it any justice. They are too poetic, too full of bizarre concepts, and too embedded in the greater body of work. There are the underpeople, animals shaped into human form, and endowed with human intelligence. There is space-two, through which people travel in planiform ships in two dimensions. There is the longevity drug, stroom, from the planet Norstrilia, and there are the Lords of the Instrumentality of Man.

"On the Gem Planet" (designated "Part 1" in the book) introduces us to Cashier O'Neill, and to Pontropidan, an airless, gem-encrusted world where people live in great domes. The plot involves a horse found in a deep air-containing canyon, and tells how Cashier, with the help of a telepathic dog-woman, solves the problem of what to do with the horse, in exchange for a weapon he can use back on Mizzer. It is good Smith, but not great Smith.

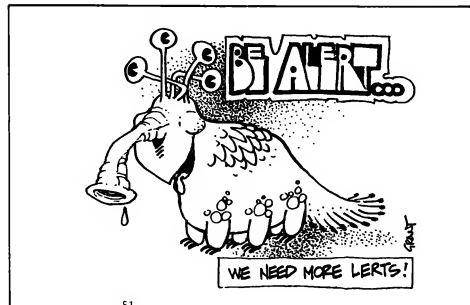
"On the Storm Planet" (Part 2), in contrast, is a major piece. It is of novella length, and is set on the tornado-torn world of Henriada.

Cashier is offered a power cruiser if he will do one thing for the besotted Administrator: Kill a little girl. The girl, it turns out, is a turtle girl with a life expectancy of 89,000 years. She has been imprinted with the personality of a woman with fantastic hypnotic powers, and is the most powerful being on the planet. In the course of his adventures, Cashier also meets a somewhat insane Ge-Captain in a portion of a mansion rigged up as a planiform ship and a man who lives in suspended animation 953 of the time, waking periodically to make sure things are running smoothly. This is Smith at his inventive best.

"On the Sand Planet" (Part 3) is probably the least satisfactory of the four. Cashier returns to Mizzer with powers he has acquired from the turtle girl, and by the fourth page has straightened things out with Colonel Wedder. The remainder of the story consists of Cashier wandering about the planet searching for some sort of ultimate truth. The problem with this type of story is that no matter what kind of ending the author can come up with, it will be a letdown. The only successful example of this sort of thing I can think of is Hesse's *SIDDHARTHA*. In Smith's case, it falls flat.

"Three to a Given Star" (Part 4) only tangentially involves Cashier. It is about three people who have been transformed into machines of destruction and have been sent to a planet from which threatening telepathic messages have been picked up. Like the first story it is good but not excellent.

Generally speaking, the quality of this collection is below that of the first two Smith books, but it is definitely worth a read.



THE WORLD IS ROUND

By Tony Rothman

Ballantine, 1978, 446 pp., incl.

Appendix, #27213.

First Printing, July, 1978

Reviewed by Stephen Lewis

There is a recent trend in the world of science fiction publishing that you've probably noticed as well. Science fiction novels, even those by first-time authors, are getting longer and longer and longer. May they sizzle in their own bloated fat!

I have an internal compulsion to finish any book I start, and I'm firmly convinced that to say anything at all about a book, a reviewer has had at least to have read it. Neither compulsion nor conviction has done any good this time. I've finished 13 chapters, that's 182 pages and the size of a pretty good book in itself, and that's as far as I'm going.

Why? Simple. I'm bored stupid.

TE DEUM, DE'UM
TE DEUM, DE'UM
b TEDIUM TUM TUM TUM
TUM TUM TUM TEDIUM



Rothman seems to have done a more than adequate job with the math and physics end of things, and he seems to have the credentials needed to justify the existence of the planet Patra-Bannk. It's a huge, probably hollow world, so huge that the inhabitants know it can't be anything but flat, and it travels around its sun in such a way that the months-long days and nights are exactly the same as the planet's summers and winters. Keeping track of time itself is a major chore because of certain other irregularities in the orbit. I'm not sure that I understood all the details, but I'm confident that the scientific principles involved are sound.

So what's wrong? Well, as explorers the characters are idiots and clowns, and much of the behavior and motivations of the natives did not seem to make much more sense. While there's not much excuse for the former, I grant you that there's certainly nothing wrong with aliens whose actions are quite incomprehensible, and ordinarily I'd be quite pleased, but you see, on the other hand, it doesn't mean that they're interesting, aliens or not. And the constant switching back and forth between the scattered separated members of the crew of Number Two fails to build any suspense at all; it just makes it hard work to remember what it was that was going on a couple of chapters back.

Lewis' Rule: When you can't recall in Chapter Ten what happened in Chapter Eight, it must have been one hell of a forgettable experience.

Doth Rothman have a future? I'd say that he needs more skills as a writer before tackling a project of this magnitude, but that's only my opinion. There wouldn't be a tendency for SF novels to get this thick if there weren't a market for them.

THE INTELLIGENCE AGENTS

By Timothy Leary

Peace Press, Inc., 3828 Willat Ave,

Culver City, CA, 90230.

1979, 214 pp., paper, \$7.95

Reviewed by Neal Wilgus

This is Timothy Leary's fourth book to appear since his release from prison several years ago, and like the other three (WHAT DOES WOMAN WANT?, 1976, EXO-PSYCHOLOGY, 1977 and NEUROPOLITICS, 1978), this title is a spirited defense of Leary's SMI LE scenario -- Space Migration, Intelligence Increase, Life Extension. These three "inevitable" developments in mankind's near future, Leary never tires of repeating, are part of the destiny preprogrammed for us by our DNA instructions and foreseen aeons ago by the Starseed overseers (possibly our future selves) who planned it all out in advance.

Leary makes his SMI LE almost a religion, but so far he has established no church (a la Hubbard and Scientology) and he is entertaining enough about it to make his books readable, if somewhat repetitious. INTELLIGENCE AGENTS, which is concerned mainly with the I² aspect of SMI LE, is a McLuhanesque hodgepodge of lectures, articles and fictional accounts of Leary's exile in

Switzerland (continued from WHAT DOES WOMAN WANT?). Leary would like us to believe this is all a new science he calls Neurologic, but what it really is is Leary's dramatic ego trips liberally mixed with his outrageous speculations about human history and destiny. What makes it worth reading is the author's personality and his message of hope for the future when the present is looking increasingly grim.

ANALOG YEARBOOK

Edited By Ben Bova

Ace, Jan., 1979 (Baronet, 1977)

299 pp., \$1.95

Reviewed by Mark Cofta

ANALOG YEARBOOK is the first of a proliferation of Analog Books published by Ace Books and, so far, edited by Ben Bova. This is the only totally non-reprint Analog Book yet offered -- Sam Nicholson's CAPTAIN EMPIRICAL, Orson Scott Card's CAPTOL, Stephen Robinett's PROJECTIONS, Bova's MAXWELL'S DEMONS and THE BEST OF ASTOUNDING, edited by Tony Lewis, are all collections originating from Analog and similar sources. The latter and ANALOG YEARBOOK first appeared last year as Baronet trade paperbacks.

ANALOG YEARBOOK is billed as a thirteenth issue, and is part of Analog's attempt to say "Look at me!" from the paperback racks. This book is slanted toward the new reader of Analog, and is a good collection of Analog names -- Card, Robinett, and Nicholson, as well as Kate Wilhelm, Robert Bloch, Spider Robinson, and, with non-fiction, Greg Benford and Barry Malzberg.

Wilhelm's "Julian" seems promising but ultimately fails due to incomprehensible cardboard characters. Julian searches for a woman who is rejuvenated by water. He finds her. A disappointment. "Too Soon We Grow Old" by Spider Robinson, concerns a woman who made money instead of babies and later regrets it. Robinson's writing is always energetic and enjoyable -- this may be the book's best. Bloch's "Oh, Say Can You See" is a triviality about the real rulers of Earth.

"Guzman's Gardener", by Stephen Robinett, is a fair entry. Paco, the Gardener, can speak to anyone in their own language, and he proves useful in films. Nicholson's "More Deadly Than the Male" is another Captain Schuster story. I like "the old man"; Nicholson writes tight, sparkling stories, and Schuster is offbeat and fun. A wise choice for

the longest piece in the book. Card's "Kingsmeat" is a chilling, well-written little fable about a shepherd and his flock.

Malzberg adds a fine article, "The Fifties", for the Reference Library. Jeff Rovin contributes a now-dated article on 1977's SF movies. Malcolm Thaler writes an optimistic piece on immunity to cancer, and William Bainbridge and Murray Dalzell contribute an article on their sociological study of twenty-seven SF authors. Benford's editorial is on science and awe in SF.

The few illustrations were done by Analog regulars. Most are by Gaughan, but the best is by Janet Aulisio.

I can't wholeheartedly recommend ANALOG YEARBOOK. As a representative issue it's okay, but at \$1.95 you're better off buying the magazine instead. This should have been better than the average issue; instead, it is only fair, a pleasant but forgettable read.

ALIEN WORLDS
Edited by Paul Collins
Void Publications, Melbourne 1979
ISBN 0 909117 05 5
Hardcover, 252 pp., \$A12.95

Plus a Commentary on:
Void Publications

POB 66, St. Kilda, Victoria 3182
Australia

Reviewed by Terence M. Green

Void Publications is a small press outfit that is slowly evolving into a major force in both world science fiction publishing and Australian book publishing. Paul Collins is the force behind most of the operation -- a bookseller and writer himself, he seems aware of the problems of both these functions and is rapidly educating himself as both editor and publisher as well. He has edited and published two previous anthologies (ENVISAGED WORLDS and OTHER WORLDS), and this, ALIEN WORLDS, marks his third and most confident entry.

Australian book publishing being the small industry that it is scarcely accommodates the writers of the country, and most must seek publication where the major book publishers operate (i.e., -- the USA and Great Britain); in the specific field in which Collins has chosen to operate -- that of science fiction, fantasy, or even surrealistic fiction -- this is doubly true.

Australian writers must get themselves published in the States or England, simply because that's where

the publishing industry exists as a major industry. But the irony of this is that all English speaking writers are bound by the same constraints. The States and England -- New York and London -- that's been it for everyone for ages. Even a Canadian must, like an Australian, look to these countries as a market. Likewise New Zealand, the Republic of Ireland, and South Africa -- among other, smaller English speaking countries -- are all tied to the major publishing industries that exist in the Big Two countries. A bit of a burr in the pants for writers, right?

The emergence of Void Publications, then, provides a breath of fresh air for Australian writers specifically, and for English speaking writers in all other countries as well, for finally there exists a major market for a specific type of fiction somewhere else! Collins can handle the Australian SF and fantasy writer, and can provide yet another world-wide alternative which is slowly starting to draw submissions from other countries as well.

So what exactly has he been publishing? Well, ENVISAGED WORLDS contained 21 stories -- all by Australian writers, and gave Collins a chance to get his feet wet in his new venture; he learned much and proceeded to his next anthology, OTHER WORLDS, which contained 16 stories -- 11 Australian authors, 4 Americans, 1 Canadian; and now comes ALIEN WORLDS, containing 18 writers: 14 Australians, 3 Americans, 1 Canadian. All in all then, Collins has published 55 stories in about a year and a half, provided a major outlet for Australian writers, and a viable alternative world market for writers from everywhere, raising Void Publications onto the international scene -- beyond the parochial, giving Australians an edge most assuredly, but also allowing them to compete with writers from everywhere.

What will one find if one delves into ALIEN WORLDS? One will find a sensible Introduction which deals with much of the preceding.

Then they will find fiction by Wynne Whiteford, David Lake, Trudy Rose, Bruce Gillespie, David King, excerpts from A. Bertram Chandler's new novel MATILDA'S STEPHILDERN (which is being published in London shortly; all Chandler's work has previously had to see publication outside his country of residence). Collins himself includes an offering, and then we have a story from noted author Cherry Wilder; Kendall Evans writes an apocalyptic little tale; Jack Wodhams writes a dazzling

story, "One Clay Foot", that causes one to reflect on the simplicity of space battles such as those in STAR WARS. John Clark extrapolates ad absurdum in a fascinating story set in Queensland; Alan Carr adds a poetic tale; Lynette Godfrey, Darrell Schweitzer and Rob Gerrard all entertain; Van Ikin writes a horrifyingly fascinating and simple tale that can burn a hole through you; C.C. Clinegan and myself (Terence Green) round out the volume. Since any attempt at objectifying a response to my own story would rightly be suspect, suffice to say that it could cause educational theorists everywhere to raise eyebrows slightly.

The book is refreshing for many reasons. We get to see new names, get to evaluate new potentials, get to see talents develop if we have followed from the first volume in the series. The book has a different "feel" from an American one or a British one -- and well it should! It is different. And it is refreshing because we get to see someone tackling the multinational publishing houses that virtually strangle the field, and achieving a modest success. Surely if we must spend our money, and spend library money acquiring books, it makes sense to acquire and support this type of alternative rather than the stockholders of Harper & Row or Doubleday or William Collins. If this sounds like your kind of book, buy it. And if the best you can do is to ask your local library to get it, then do that. It is a book that is fun to read, and a venture that is worth supporting.

LETTER FROM TERRY GREEN
9 Parkhurst Blvd, Toronto,
Ontario, Canada, M4G 2C4
August 23, 1979

'An Afterthought:
'If anyone might wish to order the book after reading the review they can get copies from me cheaper and faster than ordering direct from Collins in Australia. Price in Australia is \$A12.95, which is more than \$US12.95, and much faster shipping time. But I only have about 20 copies left to sell here in North America. When they're gone, as they will be soon, order direct from Collins.'

NOTE FROM PAUL COLLINS 7-27-79

'As a special offer to your readers, you can offer ALIEN WORLDS at Aust\$8 -- it retails here at \$12.95. I'll pay postage.'

((A\$8 equals US\$9 at present exchange rates. ALIEN WORLDS is a bargain at this special price.))

NOISE LEVEL

a column

john brunner

OF SHOES AND SHIPS AND SEALING WAX,
IF ANY ARE TO BE HAD

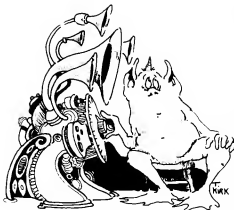
There must be something extremely wrong with yours truly. No, I don't mean I'm suffering from a loathsome disease. I just seem to have a gift for preferring items which everybody else dislikes. Convertible cars, for example. One by one the cars I dreamed of owning have been discontinued, not for practical reasons like excessive petrol/gas consumption but for absurd and irrelevant reasons like internal company re-organisation.

If they still built the Daimler SF250 I'd own one today: A fiberglass body that can never rust, an all-up kerb weight of one UK ton, a 2 1/2-litre V8 engine as smooth as a turbine, comfortable seating for four adults with the top down and three with the top up (I stress that -- I once drove mine more than ten hours in a single day and I still wasn't aching at the end of the trip), a top speed of 125 m.p.h. combined with the best gearbox ratios I ever encountered, excellent manners -- I learned mountain-driving on the SP250 -- and a regular 27 m.p.g. (Imperial gallons, of course. Deduct 20% for US gallons.)

Alas, Jaguar went shopping for V8 engines, bought out Daimler, and promptly discontinued the SP250 because it was too much competition for the E-type, which seated two people, accepted a handbag and a toothbrush by way of luggage (we once packed the trunk of our SP250 with all the bags needed for four people holidaying in Greece and had room to spare. It was an ugly brute of a car... but oh, how practical!) and I was very lucky gave you 18 m.p.g.

Agreed, it could do 145 m.p.g. But that's even more illegal than 125.

Later comes along the Triumph Stag. I have one. It's seven years old. I've run it up to 61,500 miles, having bought it at about 8000. Only three times have I had to add oil between services (levels check at 3000 miles, full service at 6000). I won't claim it's flawless; I had trouble with the radiator



thermostat more than once, but that seems to have been due to a bad batch at the factory; the latest is working fine. The solenoid on the overdrive switch failed. A flying stone carved a gash across the radiator when it got caught in the nylon fan blades. A faulty circuit on the light inside the boot/trunk drained the battery one night, so I had it disconnected. Number three fuse just blew, after seven years, and had to be replaced and some corrosion cleaned off the turn signal leads.

But I would get in that car tomorrow and cheerfully drive to Athens. Which I've done more than once. It is the most reliable car I've ever owned, and while its top speed -- from a 3-litre V8 with overdrive (which latter, as we discovered when the above-mentioned solenoid failed just as we were arriving in France, makes a 15% difference to petrol/gas consumption) -- is still about 120 m.p.h., I imagine, even though I've never exceeded 115 on it according to the speedometer, it routinely gives us 25 (UK) m.p.g. and once I achieved 27.3. Not in a city, naturally, but touring.

You know what the management at British Leyland did when they were (as you might expect) selling every Stag they could produce and there was a long waiting list?

They cancelled it.

It isn't just cars, though. A good few years ago it dawned on me that ever since I was a kid and compelled to accept what my parents bought, I'd been using the same brand of toothpaste. I decided to carry out a sort of one-man consumer survey, because I had trouble with bleeding gums.

I found a toothpaste whose taste I regarded as quite delicious (if you can imagine an un-sweet butter-scotch, that's roughly it) and which,

moreover, solved my gum problem within a couple of weeks. It was TCP toothpaste. I resolved to use it regularly.

Five months later it was withdrawn from the market.

For years and years I resisted the blandishments of the after-shave people. I preferred to splash a bit of straight surgical spirit on, or use a styptic pencil, if I must. In the end, after being bought sundry Christmas presents too expensive to throw away, I yielded and performed another one-man consumer evaluation.

And chose a rather nice range of toiletries, marketed by a not-very-pretentious firm called Goya under the general name Aqua Manda -- because the fragrance was based on mandarin orange peel, and I prefer light scents, like the citrusy type. So I settled for Aqua Manda Pre- and after-shave.

Would you care to guess what happened last time I asked for more at my local pharmacy?

That's right. The range of men's toiletries has been discontinued; only the women's range remains, and they add musk to that -- or something equally cloying... Reminds me. I once had a tremendously likable and talented girl-friend, an Israeli dance-instructor, who affected heavy perfumes like musk and patchouli and what-have-you. I never plucked up the courage to tell her that the reason I didn't want to go on seeing her was that every time I put my nose down towards her neck I felt as though I was about to suffocate. Me, I like the scent of well-washed warm skin better than any artificial additives.

The process continues. I decided to give up cigarettes and smoke occasional cigars, because I enjoy tobacco but smoking cigarettes was not only ruining my wind but also wrecking my taste and smell, and I love good food, good wine, and all like that. So I stopped myself inhaling -- cigar smoke is too strong for me to do it without choking -- and my taste and smell miraculously came back. (I am now a tolerably good intuitive cook. Hooray.)

But cigars are expensive here. I signed on with an outfit called Cigar Club which specialises in what the wine-trade would call "bin-ends" -- i.e. reminders. I sampled as many cigars as I could afford, and concluded that I prefer the long panatella size, and above all I liked the Hofnar Wilde panatellas -- called "wilde" because they are left uncut at the lighted end, so you don't need to suck the flame up through the tobacco.

I bought a thousand of them at remainder prices, to be stored in a humidior and mailed to me monthly by hundreds. The supply recently ran out.

And, even though just about everybody I have offered one to over the time they lasted has said they were excellent, first-rate, outstanding or delicious, I am informed that I have had the last, the absolutely last, of the stock.... for the importers who buy them from Holland have discontinued the line.

There is something terribly wrong with John Brunner. Do you suppose I could turn this to account by hiring myself out to stockbroking firms? I could choose an ideal share, or range of shares, fervently convinced that this was the way to a fortune; then they could say, "Brunner's picked so-and-so; this means it's bound to go broke in next to no time -- sell!"

* * *

This column was intended to include another installment of "John Brunner Versus the Meddling Moron", because I just received the copy-edited script of my forthcoming Ballantine novel, *THE INFINITIVE OF GO*... but for the first time in my entire career I ceremonially burned the copy-editor's work in our dining room fireplace, since it was cheaper than sending out for more Liquid Paper, and quicker, if I re-photocopied my original version and sent that back instead.

I did, however, salvage a few pages of peculiarly awful interference in order to demonstrate to the chief editor at Ballantine (who is, I'm sure, a perfectly nice person apart from his inability to choose competent sub-editors for works by yours truly) that I was arguing from sound evidence when I claimed that the copy-editor had done more harm than good.

Here is the peak and summit of her (I have the chief editor's authority for the form of that possessive) achievement:

My version: "Now and then there was a student rising to sack some particular stick-in-the-mud."

Her version: "Now and then a student would rise to sack..."

Anybody who cares to write to Ballantine and advocate her dismissal will greatly oblige

JOHN BRUNNER.

REALITY IS A CRUTCH FOR FANTASY
— ALTER EGO

AND THEN I READ....



BY THE EDITOR

BEASTS OF GOR by John Norman.
DAW UJ1363, \$1.95, 1978.

I couldn't get all the way through the first Gor book many years ago, and I couldn't get through this one now, for different reasons.

The first time I felt the book too slow and too concerned with detailing the social-cultural aspects of Gorean life and times.

This book... The author betrays an obsession, a compulsion, to dwell repeatedly, endlessly, minutely, on the subject of women slaves; how to use them, handle them, discipline them, dominate them, create them.

Either Dr. John Lange (the real author) is writing highly subtle satire here, or he's simply lost in a master/slave male sex/dominance fantasy trip to the extent of plotting this book to provide endless opportunities for his macho superhero Tarl Cabot to lord it over beautiful young women (almost all kidnapped from present-day U.S.A.). There's much bondage and sex---and the women love it, can't get enough, beg for it...

As I say, I got sick and tired of that repetitive routine and threw the book across the room.

It's a bad novel because of Dr. Lange's obsessions; it's structured to allow him to indulge his obsession, his wish fantasy, his id dreams... Too bad, because there are interesting bits and pieces between the dominance/bondage scenes.

SPACE PIRATES---#2 IN THE LORD TERIC SERIES by E.E. "Doc" Smith with Gordon Eklund.
Baronet, \$4.95, 1979.

Written on the same Juvenile level as STAR WARS was filmed. The Good Guys are interstellar pirates fighting to overthrow a rotten galactic empire. They have kidnapped the daughter of the richest, most-powerful man in the empire...

Tedicr was brought to this space-time continuum from another ("long, long ago in a far galaxy...") by the Scientists to save the universe from a mysterious evil invasion by Awful Creatures. But first--the slavery-loving empire and the selfish monster corporations must go!

The story moves fast and is written in what I would call pulp-shallow style. The amaze I experience is that Gordon Eklund could tame and discipline himself to do this flat, gutless writing. But, then, he's had a lot of practice.

"Doc" Smith, of course, is dead. Eklund has taken, or been assigned to take, Smith's 1950s Tedicr creation and continue him in a series of novel-length adventures. These are 13-year old fodder.

The book is published in the trade paperback format.

MACROLIFE by George Zebrowski
Harper & Row, \$12.95, 1979.

They call it a novel, but it reads as a propaganda piece for the concept of macrolife---mankind living in space-traveling miniature worlds. Free of planets. With a different social organization adapted for the macrolife lifestyle.

The hero is macrolife. The humans, in episodes structured to show how insufficient is dirt-living, are tools to act out the scenario.

In the end macrolife spreads through all the universe and lives till the final contraction, the death of our universe---and then macrolife (millions of mobile macro-worlds) take a chance and dive into the ultimate black hole in a calculated chance at life in the Big Bang explosion that begins a new universe.

And there is a surprise even beyond that!

What we have here is a Vision of the Far, Far, Far Future of mankind. It's all idealistic wish, I suspect, and optimistic as all hell. The ultimate utopia.

For all that I disagree with the macrolife future Zebrowski here espouses, I have to admit he writes well and somehow kept me interested. There's a lot of Wonder in this book.

THE CAVE OF TIME by Edward Packard
Bantam 12790-X, \$1.25, 1979.

An experimental Juvenile that begins with you entering a time-travel cave and requiring you to make plot choices every page or so. The stories (optional) that

result are bare-bones second-person narrative, and involve jumping from page 6 to page 14 to page 114 to page 56 to page 87 to page 34....

Then you can go back and follow another time-line story to its optional conclusion.

The time-frames involve many past times and a future time. It's like a maze.

The book will amuse and occupy a boy or girl under 14, perhaps, for an hour or so. There are two other Choose Your Own Adventure books by Bantam: #2 is JOURNEY UNDER THE SEA by R.A. Montgomery, and #3 is BY BALLOON TO THE SAHARA by D. Terman. (D. Terman? Determine? Gad!)

THE TIME TRIP by Rob Swigart
Houghton Mifflin, \$4.95 trade paperback, \$8.95 hardcover. 1979.

Clever, entertaining, ironic, satiric novel involving the occult, time-travel and the ultimate Reality of it all.

A computer expert so loved his dead wife that he found a way to pursue her back to Gilgamesh's time in pre-history where she is a temple harlot. Reincarnation exists, you see, all up and down time. Buddha knows where you'll end up after you spend your orientation time in the Holiday Inn at Deathwest (or East)!

This story almost makes sense and is a devastating mockery of the CIA, the funeral business, and religion, to name the most wrecked. Historians will gulp, too.



JANISSARIES by Jerry Pournelle
Ace, \$6.95 in trade paperback. 1979.
Profusely illustrated by Bermejo.

The euphemistic story of a small group of modern-day soldiers taken by aliens to perform a service on a far planet. The soldiers divide, follow different warring states in a medieval setting. Add the coming of a long-cycle heat of many years duration caused by a maverick third sun. There is a hero, villains, love, detailed battles (which are the real stars of the book).

This is Ace's attempt to sell watered-down s-f to the masses. The well-done illustrations (every two or three pages) and the TV-level swear words ("horse-puckey") display the tactic--and the sales figures when known will prove the pudding.

ELECTRIC FOREST by Tanith Lee
DAW UE1482, \$1.75, 1979.

This is the first Lee novel I've read and I'm impressed and delighted with her sensual style, her talents and her mastery of language and narrative. There may not be one unnecessary word in this novel, and yet it is so rich and detailed and well-told that it arouses awe.

A rich, handsome man in a world of goodlooking men and women seeks one of the very few genetic mistakes; an ugly crippled young woman who is sunk into apathy and pain, and by advanced scientific skills transfers her consciousness into the android body of an exquisitely beautiful woman, while her deformed original body is kept alive in a maintenance capsule. If her capsuled body dies she dies. Only her consciousness is in (or seems to be in) the android.

The man Claudio has plans to use this creature. Revenge...murder... But Magdala blooms and her intelligence flowers until she rebels and comes face to face with the lovely real woman of whom she is a double.

This is an intricate nothing-is-what-it-seems story that may seem to cheat at the end. Not so, though it does tend to say to the reader: "Good ride, wasn't it? Too bad we had to fool you all the way through."

SUB-ZERO by Robert W. Walker
Belmont Tower S1395, \$1.75, 1979.

Man's tinkering and "improving" the weather and ocean currents has triggered--over thirty years--a new ice age.

The year is 2020 and the setting is a storm-bound skyscraper in Chicago. News people who work in the

building encounter murder, government lies and dirty tricks.

Walker has a good plot but he can't characterize worth beans and is at the mercy of his near-amateur writing style, which makes you wince and cringe at times as you read.

A PLANET CALLED TREASON

By Orson Scott Card
St. Martin's, \$10.00, 1979.

"I've endured having four arms, an extra nose, and two hearts pumping away before the surgeon took me under his knife to cut away the excess. But I could still pretend that it was just adolescence, just the bizarre jumbling of chemicals that could throw a normal Mueller into regenerative patterns. The pretense ended when I began developing a rather voluptuous pair of breasts."

Now, that's a hell of a narrative hook!

Three thousand years ago the Republic dumped forty or fifty rebels onto a metal-poor planet they called Treason. Each rebel took a territory on the main continent and set about making a nation that specialized in his talent or skill.

The Republic left behind a device for trading with each territory, and as time passed the nations traded anything they could for metal from the Republic.

The Muellers developed from the original geneticist and ended up growing and selling extra organs and body parts to the Republic.

Lanik is a Mueller, but his gone-wild body causes his exile and he is used as a spy by his father to discover how the Nkumai have suddenly acquired tons of iron and are conquering neighbor states.

From there it's strange upon strange, amaze upon amaze, intrigue upon intrigue until Lanik has acquired many of the skills of neighbor states--immortality, linkage with the earth gods, time control...

This story opens up and blows minds. But it does become progressively more incredible with each blow, and ends a victim of Too Much!

THE MERMAN'S CHILDREN by Poul Anderson.
Berkley/Putnam, \$10.95, 1979.

In the 13th Century the half-world of Faerie is dying off, as the Church and civilization crowd it out with exorcisms that work and by spreading into Faerie living space.

One race of Faerie are the merpeople who live in the continental shelves and who are beautiful and immortal except for accidental death

and murder. But they have no souls.

This very good, excellently written novel is about the tribe of mer-people who are exorcized from their Danish coast homeland and in seeking a new home end up in the Mediterranean, on the coast of Dalmatia.

And the novel follows the half-human, half-mer children of the tribe's king as they seek to help their sister who has been given to humans for her sake, being too small and weak to survive a long sea trek.

It is a story of magic lives, with sex, with death, love, greed... Whole creatures and whole humans... and overall the reality of Magic, used by the Church, used by Faerie, used by local sorcerers or witch-doctors. But over the past generations Magic has been losing its effectiveness.....

There are exploits against real sea monsters, magic sea monsters, adventures in Greenland, fighting pirates and low-life humans.

Depending on your religious orientation, the novel may tell of ongoing social/cultural/racial tragedy...or the right and true triumph of God.

The book is a marvel of skilled writing, and it is marvelously effective as an intertwined two-threaded story.

I am disturbed by this fantasy in a way: it is so real that one comes to believe this history---that God, in those olden days, was REAL, and He had powers and human life was filled with evidences of His existence. One almost wishes He had not died with the extinction of Magic, and that that great rush of bliss that then came with conversion and Christening and certitude was still possible (and not now the result of intense self-deception).

THE MERMAN'S CHILDREN is an excellent read, an excellent, detailed, real fantasy.

THE WEB BETWEEN THE WORLDS

Charles Sheffield

Ace 87862-8, \$4.95, 1979

This new novel begins with a gripping hook---an escape, a secret, an exploding passenger jet over Antarctica....

Then it slows to a walk as, twenty odd years later a young man with mechanical hands becomes immersed in the biggest engineering job of the world, of all time: the construction and emplacement of a balanced elevator shaft rooted in the Earth and extending out hundreds of miles into space.

Robert Merlin also becomes intertwined in the lives of Darius

Regulo, the aged construction mogul, his daughter Corrie, the evil genetic genius Morel, the mysterious and intelligent squid Caliban, and the beautiful, drug-addicted woman, Senta.

The book grabs and holds in its later stages, as Rob seeks answers concerning his own past and unravels the mysteries involved with Caliban, Morel, and the tiny humans called "Goblins." There's good-old-fashioned life-and-death conflict and satisfactory resolution.

A satisfying read, though it clanks with contrivance and sometimes the engineering becomes boring as Regulo and Rob discuss the incredible space elevator.

THE ROAD OF AZRAEL by Robert E.

Howard. Grant, \$20.00, 1979.

West Kingston, RI 02892.

Another superb, quality hard-cover edition of Howard's stories. This time illustrated very nicely with six paintings which catch the color and savagery of Howard's ancient lands and peoples and above all his heroes.

With Howard, vivid, authentic action and fighting---and killing---is primary; and you always know who is right and who wrong. The passions in his fiction are fierce and pure. These elements may explain his unending, continuing appeal, and why readers and collectors are willing to snap up these expensive, luxurious vehicles for his stories.

The stories in this volume: "The Road of Azrael," "The Track of Behemund," "The Way of the Swords," "Hawks Over Egypt," and "Gates of Empire."

HAMMER'S SLAMMERS by David Drake

Ace 31593-3, \$1.95, 1979.

Introduction by Jerry Pournelle.

Seven-stories strung together to pose as a novel, with interludes of "non-fiction" short essays on future weapons and the organization of future wars.

We are introduced to a superior competent man, Colonel Alois Hammer, and then nosed around in stories showing how his men live and die in a mercenary army situation. Only in the final "wrap-up" story is Hammer front and center again.

As a novel this gathering of fiction-on-a-theme is a sad excuse,

but it has the virtue of showing plainly certain Grim Realities concerning men and governments, human nature and human killing.

War and killing do solve some social and political problems; that's the bitter truth most liberals and idealists would rather die than face. They usually do if they are unfortunate in their time and place of living.

A bullet carries more truth and shatters more illusions than any pen in the world, contrary to that old saying about the pen being mightier than the sword.

THE DRAGON LORD by David Drake

Berkley/Putnam, \$10.95, 1979.

"A Sword Fantasy" might be the best description of this realistic fantasy of King Arthur's England---in which Arthur and Merlin are both mad, power-hungry, cunning monsters.

The novel centers around two men, Mael and Starkad---barbarian comrades, powerful, superior fighters, who are forced into Arthur's army.

These two are whole people---real and many-sided characters---and yet heroic and virtuous...in their fashion.

Their world is the world of fighting men---swords and axes and close combat---as well as trouble piled upon trouble.

Merlin needs a certain ancient magic skull from Ireland. Mael is sent to get it by hook and by crook, with Starkad held as ransom to insure his return.

With the skull Merlin creates a spell which brings into the Earth universe a dragon, small at first, which grows, becomes progressively unmanageable as a "super weapon" and which in the end threatens to destroy the world.

Mael and Starkad are intimately and violently involved in the final struggle to kill the rampaging alien thing.

Involved also, is Valeda, a lovely faery goddess whose magic is critical in saving mankind.

But it's the uncompromising reality of the narrative---the blood, guts, and dirt of life and death in this ancient time---that gripped me and held me. That and the real people Drake created and sustained.

This is the best heroic fantasy of the year. And it is obvious there will be further adventures with Mael and Starkad. I can't wait.

PRETENDER by Piers Anthony and

Frances Hall.

Borgo Press B-230, \$4.95, 1979.

POB 2845, San Bernardino, CA 92406.

It's an adult juvenile---a kind



THE HUMAN HOTLINE

S-F NEWS BY ELTON T. ELLIOTT



Remember the address for this column is: Elton T. Elliott, SFR, 1899 Wiessner Dr. N.E., Salem, OR, 97303.

SPECIAL MEDIA SECTION

An extraordinary number of films are in planning or under production. The Christmas season promises to have an SF tinge at the cinema.

The Star Trek movie, titled prosaically, *STAR TREK THE MOTION PICTURE*, is set to open nationally December 7. Robert Abel Assoc., the company that does the Levi commercials, were hired to do special effects (Magicam in charge of miniatures). When Abel's group developed problems, Douglas Trumball and John Dykstra completed the effects. These delays bring the rumored total cost to about \$41 million, making *STAR TREK* the second most expensive film of all time; the most expensive was *CLEOPATRA*, at \$44 million.

The plethora of spinoffs include everything from beach towels to Barbie (Kirk & Spock) dolls, but nowhere will the presence of the good ship *Enterprise* be as noticeable as at the bookstore. Pocket Books have total control of the *Star Trek* items, and have prepared Calendars, Date Books, Costume Books, Iron-on Transfer Books, Blueprints and a novelization by Gene Roddenberry. These spinoffs are not connected with the SF line under independent contractor, David G. Hartwell.

Early in December, Disney will release a \$20 million movie, *THE BLACK HOLE*, reportedly carrying a PG rating, the first Disney movie carrying a Non-G rating.

The film features Maximillian Schell, Anthony Perkins, Robert Forster, Joseph Bottoms, Yvette Mimieux and Ernest Borgnine in a story of a mad scientist menacing a space probe examining a black hole.

SATURN THREE, produced by ITC and shot at Shepperton Studios in England, is scheduled for Christmas

or early 1980. The plot involves -- get this -- Farrah Fawcett and Kirk Douglas in a love quadrangle with a mad scientist and an amorous robot.

The \$25 million *STAR WARS* sequel, *THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK*, is scheduled for May. According to an interview with Gary Kurtz, published in *STARLOG*, it will feature plenty of "space battles".

STAR WARS has been banned in Quebec, according to Zodiac News Service. The Quebec Film Board found the material unsuitable for audiences. (If anyone has more info, please drop me a line.)

OTHER FILMS:

CLASH OF THE TITANS is a \$15 million picture directed by Harry Harryhausen and starring Lawrence Olivier, Maggie Smith and Claire Bloom. Five million will go for advertising and promotion, with release set for summer of 1981. Another Harryhausen project, *SINBAD ON MARS*, is set for late '81.

EMI and Orion Studios are filming Bram Stoker's *THE JEWEL OF THE SEVEN STARS*, a "gothic SF fantasy".

ASSASSINS IN TIME is a film inspired by the works of Robert A. Heinlein, Mack Reynolds and Poul Anderson's *CORRIDORS OF TIME*, according to co-producers, Douglas Crepau. Dan O'Bannon, fresh from scripting *ALIEN*, will direct.

Terry Brooks' *THE SWORD OF SHANNARA*, has been optioned for filming.

John Varley's *AIR RAID* will be produced by David Beagelman and directed by Douglas Trumball.

Gerry Anderson, the man who brought us *SPACE 1999*, is at work on a new space adventure, *FIVE STAR FIVE*.

CHILDHOOD'S END has been optioned for the umpteenth time in the last quarter-plus of a century, reportedly an ABC TV-UNIVERSAL picture.

Frank Herbert is doing the screenplay for *DUNE*. The process of adapting written work to the screen, Herbert likens to "translating into a foreign language". According to Herbert, he has completed the story treatments; the screenplay will cut the movie to three hours. He reported no director had yet been named for the \$40 million movie. In addition to *DUNE*, the Dino DeLaurentis Corp. is producing two other SF/Fantasy movies, *CONAN*, starring Arnold Schwarzenegger, and *FLASH GORDON*.

Herbert is working on *DUNE IV*, to be completed after the *DUNE* movie

TV --

Several mini-series are planned for fall:

NBC will show *THE MARTIAN CHRONICLES* and *BRAVE NEW WORLD*.

PBS will air *THE LATHE OF HEAVEN*. The footage was mostly shot in Dallas, TX, because of Oregon's in-temperate climate!

SALVAGE I will return with 13 episodes in January.

BATTLESTAR: GALACTICA will air a telefilm sometime next season, with Isaac Asimov, according to *STARLOG*, writing the script.

Ted White has been named editor of *HEAVY METAL*. He will replace the fiction with more "graphic stories" and non-fiction about comics, SF and music. *LOCUS* reported that Mr. White will earn more in one year with *HEAVY METAL* than he did in a decade as editor of *AMAZING* and *FANTASTIC* (Ultimate Publications).

Ray Bradbury is at work on a new novel. No word on whether it is SF or fantasy.

CORRECTIONS: The first two volumes of George R.R. Martin's original anthology series, *NEW VOICES* in SF, were published by Jove, not Berkley.

SFR #31: STARLOG is going monthly, not bimonthly.

SFR #32: Mr. Rauth is interested in doing a bibliography of Raymond Palmer, not Richard Shaver.

Hourglass Productions (See SFR #32 for address) has brought out three more cassette interviews with SF writers. Interviewed are Kathleen Sky-Goldin, Stephen Goldin and David Gerrold.

John Jakes will be writer-in-residence at DePauw University for the fall semester this year.

For the growing legions of SF/Fantasy game enthusiasts, there is a store carrying an extensive selection of board and role playing games. For info write: STUFF AND NONSENSE 481 Ferry St., S.E. Salem, OR 97301

Forrest J. Ackerman and Wendayne Ackerman have been working on the WCET-PBS-Carl Sagan science program for COSMOS. Forry is also an editorial consultant for GALAXY.

Maxim Jakubowski is now agenting in Europe. His address: 95 Finchley Lane London, England NW4

BOOK NEWS

BANTAM

In February, in addition to five SF titles, Bantam will publish Janet E. Morris' historical, I, THE SUN, set in the Hittite Empire when Egypt was ruled by Ikhnaton, father-in-law of Tutankhamen, and the Hittites by Shubbuliuma.

DAW

In an exclusive conversation, Donald A. Wollheim, President & Publisher of DAW Books, stated, "I have no intentions of ever opening up a hardcover line", due to hardcover inexperience and low profit margin.

DELL

Dell placed in the top two positions in the latest LOCUS SF Bestseller poll. Number one was DREAM-SNAKE by Vonda N. McIntyre, followed by John Varley's THE PERSISTENCE OF VISION. They will publish OPUS 200 by Isaac Asimov in the summer of 1980.

The contents for BINARY STAR #4 are: "The Janus Equations" by Steven G. Spruill and "Legacy" by Joan D. Vinge. "Nightflyers" by George R.R. Martin leads off BINARY STAR #5. The other half has not been decided.

DIAL

For October the title is ASI-MON'S MARVELS OF SF. Upcoming titles include: THE SNOW QUEEN by Joan D. Vinge in April and SONGMASTER by

Orson Scott Card in June (original title MICAL'S SONGBIRD).

SIGNET/NAL

New American Library which includes Signet and DAW is moving to: NAL 1633 Broadway New York, NY 10019

Signet SF Editor Sheila Gilbert, wife of Mike Gilbert who does illustrations for SFR, says they have expanded their SF line a "good deal" with "no set limit", the size depending on incoming material.

BARONET

Baronet will publish the first two in a series of ten books in March, THE GLASS TEAT and PAINGOD AND OTHER DELUSIONS -- all 10 will be reprints of earlier Harlan Ellison titles.

Publisher Norman Goldfind, in an exclusive conversation, reported that things are "going very well" at BARONET and that he is "where I hoped to be at this stage" in terms of sales. Due to production lags in the ANALOG Book Line, he feels "we probably will not (continue the line) and Ace probably will".

BERKLEY

Two hardbacks scheduled for October release, MALAFRENA by Ursula K. LeGuin and TRANSFIGURATION by Michael Bishop, have been moved to November.

NOVEMBER

ACE

Robert Asprin ----- (Trade) TAM BU
Jerry E. Pournelle (Ed.)-THE ENDLESS
FRONTIER: VOL. 1
Gordon R. Dickson -----ON THE RUN
(Revised & up-dated version of
MANKIND ON THE RUN)
Robert Shekley -----THE STATUS
CIVILIZATION/NOTIONS UNLIMITED
A. Bertram Chandler -----THE RIM OF
SPACE/THE SHIP FROM OUTSIDE
Marion Zimmer Bradley-----SEVEN FROM
THE STARS

AVON

Joe Haldeman -----INFINITE DREAMS
James Blish -----BLACK EASTER

BANTAM

Robert Shekley -----CROMPTON DIVIDED
Robert Shekley--THE WONDERFUL WORLD
OF ROBERT SHEKLEY
Gordon Eklund -----DEVIL WORLD
(A Star Trek novel)

BARONET

Orson Scott Card -----CAPITOL
Barry N. Malzberg & Bill Prozini --
-----THE END OF SUMMER:
THE SF OF THE FIFTIES
Jules Verne -----THE JULES VERNE
(Fully Illustrated)---COMPANION

BERKLEY

Philip Jose Farmer-----RIVERWORLD AND
OTHER STORIES
(The title story, written in the
fifties and never published, has
been expanded to three times its
original length.)
Arthur Byron Cover -----AN EASTWIND
COMING
Robert Thurston-----ALICIA II
Robert E. Howard ----BLACK VULMEA'S
REVENGE

DAW

Jack Vance -----THE FACE
(4th in the Demon Prince Series)
Lin Carter-----JOURNEY TO THE
UNDERGROUND WORLD
(A new series)
E.C. Tubb -----IDUNA'S UNIVERSE
(Dumarest #21)
John Norman -----GHOST DANCE
(Non-Gor)
A.E. Van Vogt -----THE MAN WITH A
THOUSAND NAMES

DELL

F. Paul Wilson--WHEELS WITHIN WHEELS
(A LaNague novel)
Philip K. Dick-----TIME OUT OF JOINT
L. Sprague de Camp & Fletcher Pratt
-----WALL OF SERPENTS
(First time in softcover)

DEL REY

All titles written by L. Frank Baum:
THE WIZARD OF OZ
THE LAND OF OZ
OZMA OF OZ
DOROTHY AND THE WIZARD OF OZ
THE ROAD TO OZ
THE EMERALD CITY OF OZ
THE PATCHWORK GIRL OF OZ

DOUBLEDAY

Lloyd Biggle Jr. ---- THE WHIRLIGIG
OF TIME
Charles L. Grant (Ed.)--- SHADOWS II

POCKET

Walter Wangerin ---- THE BOOK OF THE
DUN COW
Robert Silverberg (Ed.)-----THE BEST
OF NEW DIMENSIONS
Thomas N. Disch-ECHO ROUND HIS BONES
James E. Gunn-----THE IMMORTALS
Theodore Sturgeon-E PLURIBUS UNICORN

SIGNET

Barbara Paul ----- BIBBLINGS
Robert A. Heinlein ----- WALDO AND
MAGIC INC
Walter Irwin & G.B. Love ---THE BEST
OF TREK

DECEMBER

ACE

Poul Anderson and Mildred Downey
Broxon -----THE DEMON OF SCATTERY
(Trade Ed., illustrated by Alicia
Austin, cover by Michael Whelan)
Michael de Larrabetti--THE BORRIBLES

Charles Sheffield ----- VECTORS
(Short Story Collection)
Wal & Leigh Richmond ----- PHASE TWO
(Expanded version of PHOENIX SHIP)
Frank Herbert ----- THE GREEN BRAIN
Robert E. Howard ----- THREE BLADED DOOM

AVON

Poul Anderson & Gordon R. Dickson --
----- EARTHMAN'S BURDEN
John Christopher -- NO BLADE OF GRASS

BANTAM

Dennis Polumbo ----- CITY WARS
Robert Weverka ----- SPECTOR

BERKLEY

Jack Massa ----- MOONCROW
Kevin O'Donnell Jr. ----- MAYFLIES
Glen Cook ----- A SHADOW OF ALL NIGHT
----- FALLING
(First of trilogy)
Robert E. Howard ----- SWORD WOMAN

DAW

Jack Vance ----- EMPYRIO
Jessica Amanda Salmonson (Ed.) -----
----- AMAZONS!
Drey Prescott ----- A FORTUNE FOR KREGAN
(21st in the series)
Richard L. Purtill ----- THE GOLDEN
GRYPHON FEATHER
Donald A. Wollheim (Ed.) ----- WOLLEHEIM'S
WORLD'S BEST SF: SERIES #3

DELL

Michael G. Coney ----- CHARISMA
(Cover by Stanislaw Fernandez)
Theodore Sturgeon ----- VENUS PLUS X
Piers Anthony ----- HASAN
(Cover by Enrich, interior
illustrations by Fabian)

DEL REY

Alan Dean Foster ----- THE BLACK HOLE
E. Hoffman Price ----- THE DEVIL WIVES
OF LI FONG
David Gerrold ----- THE WORLD OF STAR TREK
Leonard Nimoy ----- I AM NOT SPOCK
(Non-Fiction)
Ray Bradbury ----- FAHRENHEIT 451
Leigh Brackett ----- THE GINGER STAR

DOUBLEDAY

Manly Wade Wellman ----- THE OLD GODS
AWAKEN
Jim Morris ----- THE SHERIFF OF PURGATORY

POCKET

Nancy Springer ----- THE WHITE HART
Keith Laumer ----- A PLAGUE OF DEMONS
A.E. Van Vogt ----- THE UNIVERSE MAKER
James Young ----- THE FACE OF THE DEEP
(First Novel)
Jack Vance ----- THE DYING EARTH

SIGNET

James E. Gunn ----- THE ROAD TO SF: #3
(A Mentor Book)
Robert Heinlein ----- BEYOND THIS HORIZON

JANUARY

ACE

Gordon R. Dickson ----- MASTERS OF EVERON
(Trade)

Dr. Robert W. Prehoda ----- YOUR NEXT
FIFTY YEARS
(Trade, Non-SF, Intro by Pournelle)
Michael Kurland ----- PLURIBUS
John Eric Holmes ----- MURDERED
(The first of five sequels to
ARMAGEDDON 2419, the original
Buck Rogers novel)
Poul Anderson -- AGENT OF THE TERRAN
EMPIRE
(Updated, Revised)
Fred Saberhagen ----- THE DRACULA TAPES
Ursula K. LeGuin ----- THE LEFT HAND OF
DARKNESS

AVON

No data available.

BANTAM

L. Sprague de Camp & Fletcher Pratt
----- TALES FROM GAVIGAN'S BAR
Robert Silverberg ----- TOWER OF GLASS

BARONET

Alfred Bester ----- THE STARS MY
DESTINATION: VOL. II
(Illustrated)

BERKLEY

Jack C. Haldeman II ----- VECTOR ANALYSIS
Norman Spinrad ----- BUG JACK BARRON
Piers Anthony ----- VISION OF TAROT
(Sequel to GOD OF TAROT)
Robert E. Howard ----- THE VULTURES
OF WHAPTON
John Silbersack & Virginia Schuchet-
(Editors) ----- THE BERKLEY SHOWCASE:
NEW WRITINGS IN SF

DAW

Tim Huntley ----- ONE ON KNEE
John Brunner ----- THE AVENGERS OF CARRIG
Lin Carter (Ed.) ----- THE YEAR'S BEST
FANTASY STORIES: #5
Edward Llewellyn ----- THE BRIGHT
COMPANION
(CORRECTION: Also the author of
THE DOUGLAS CONVOLUTION (DAB, Oct)
not Edward Wellen (SFR #32)
George O. Smith ----- THE SECOND WAR
OF THE WORLDS

DELL

John Jakes ----- THE FORTUNES OF BRAK
Philip K. Dick ----- CLANS OF THE
ALPHANE MOON
Theodore Sturgeon ----- BEYOND

DEL REY

Jack L. Chalker ----- THE RETURN OF
NATHAN BRAZIL
L. Neal Smith ----- THE PROBABILITY
BROADCH
Anne McCaffrey ----- ALOCHY & ACADEME
Edson McCann ----- PREFERRED RISK
(McCann is pen-name for Frederik
Pohl and Lester del Rey)
Leigh Brackett ----- THE HOUNDS OF SKAITH
John Roy Flint ----- A GUIDE TO BARSOOM

DOUBLEDAY

Jacqueline Lichtenberg & Jean Lorrah
(3rd in Sime Series) ----- FIRST CHANNEL
Walter Tevis ----- ONLY THE MOCKINGBIRD

POCKET

Michael Bishop ----- THE EYES OF FIRE
(Tentative title, a revision of
A FUNERAL FOR THE EYES OF FIRE)
Hilbert Schenck ----- WAVE RIDER
(Five Stories from F&SF)
Louise Lawrence ----- STAR LORD
(No connection to the comic book)
Thomas M. Disch ----- THE PUPPIES OF
TERRA
(Unabridged Edition of MANKIND
UNDER THE LEASH)
Jerry E. Pournelle ----- HIGH JUSTICE

SIGNET

Robert Adams ----- THE SAVAGE MOUNTAINS
(A Horsecslans Novel)
Brian W. Aldiss ----- GREYBEARD
Stephen King ----- THE STAND
(A Signet lead title, all the
other King titles are being reissued)

MAGAZINES:

AMAZING & FANTASTIC

(Quarterlies -- Schedule Unknown)
David Truesdale was fired be-
fore writing a column, as was Craig
Anderson.

COMMENT: I am boycotting them
until they change their policy of
not paying the author when they re-
print a story.

DESTINIES

(#4 - Aug; #5 - Oct)
The January, 1980, issue, #6,
has been postponed to February; the
cover wasn't ready on schedule.

GALILEO

(#14 - Sept)
The November issue should be
out now. Of a 108,000 print run for
the first newstand issue, 40,000
sold, a 37% sale rate, good for the
first issue of a nationally distrib-
uted magazine. (Figures from a re-
port in SF CHRONICLE). If the re-
ported 60,000+ subscriptions are
correct, then the total sales top
100,000.

GALAXY

(Extremely erratic -- Vol. #39,
#8, #9, #10)
I wrote my second column for
GALAXY a year ago; it still hasn't
come out. I wrote a third column in
May; I haven't been paid. I will do
no more material for GALAXY until I
am reimbursed.

STARLOG/FUTURE LIFE

(STARLOG -- Monthly)
(FUTURE LIFE -- Eight Yearly)
The STARLOG SF YEARBOOK, edited
by David A. Truesdale, should be
out now.

AND THEN I HEARD....

BY THE EDITOR

THE WAR OF THE WORLDS

By Jeff Wayne
Columbia 35290

At first thought a musical version of H.G. Wells' novel of an invasion of Earth by Martians in 1897 seems ludicrous, but with Richard Burton's impressive, compelling narration, and with Jeff Wayne's inspired, vivid, chilling music, and with a cast of actors filling in scenes... The result is an experience that at times sends chills down the spine.

This two-record album comes with wrap-around and inside paintings of scenes from the book by Geoff Taylor and Michael Trim--both excellent, graphic, detailed action sequences. And there are more large paintings in a large-size booklet which contains the full text of the spoken parts of the album, as well as credits and short biographies of Burton, Wayne, and the cast.

I can't say enough about the paintings by Geoff Taylor, nor about the strange, riveting music, and the superb voice and delivery of Burton.

A superior production.

SURVIVAL SHIP and THE SHRINE OF TEMPTATION

Read by the author, Judith Merrill
Caedon TC 1593

A pleasant surprise is Judith Merrill's smooth, graceful, professional reading. She obviously prepared well for this dramatic reading, and is blessed with a low, velvety voice.

She is helped by her choice of stories; both contain little dialog and both sustain interest.

"Survival Ship" depends on the ultimate revelation of the sexual make-up of an interstellar spaceship for its impact--which has lost impact and become dated since its first publication in 1950.

"The Shrine of Temptation" is another matter--mysterious, intriguing, timeless...and a bit frustrating as many of the questions involving the Shrine and the humans on another planet who worship it, and its origins and strange, magic-like function, go unanswered.

This is one of the best author-reading Caedon records. Judith Merrill makes you want to meet and talk with her; a superior woman.

THE BOOK OF MERLYN

Read by Christopher Plummer
Caedon TC 1582

The delight of this record is the marvelous voice of Christopher Plummer; he whispers, whines, commands, pleads, is enraged...in character, with subtle shifts in timbre, inflection, power. But above all he is an aural treat as he portrays Merlyn in frustrating encounters with a puzzled, slow King Arthur who cannot quite encompass being in...book?

There is philosophy in these excerpts, humor, a steadily unfolding world of a metaphysical and imaginary past/present/future.

More than any other record I've listened to in this series, this one made me want to buy and read: THE BOOK OF MERLYN by T.H. White.

And it made me want to listen to anything recorded by Christopher Plummer.

THE LAND OF OZ

Read by Ray Bolger
Caedon TC 1618

You might think Ray Bolger would butcher this assignment, but he has a fine, flexible, expressive voice perfectly suited for this children's story. He keeps each character separate and recognizable, and his narration and pitch are infectious and playful.

The story involves a little boy, an evil witch, her independent-minded creation, Jack Pumpkinhead, a magical Powder of Life (which the boy has taken from her and which he uses to animate a wooden sawhorse and a flying Gump--made of old furniture and palm leaves), a power struggle for the Emerald City which the Scarecrow



now rules, an invading army of women, incompetent soldiers...

Clearly there is an underlying social commentary by L. Frank Baum in the tale. But it is written with the simplicity and directness of small children's reading material, and tends to make an adult fidget.

THE MARTIAN CHRONICLES

Read by Leonard Nimoy
Caedon TC 1466

The two stories presented in this album are "There Will Come Soft Rains" and "UsherII."

Again, the superb, trained, dramatic voice of an accomplished actor makes these stories come alive in ways the author, Ray Bradbury could not. The producers at Caedon must always confront the choice: present the material the best way possible, or compromise the material with the voice of the author, since the author is rarely able to equal the professional.

Both stories are about houses, and both have messages for today embedded in them, messages which are more and more relevant: too much stupid, rule-bound government, and the futility of stupid, rule-bound technology.

This is an absorbing, thought-provoking, entertaining album.

THE SWORD OF SHANNARA

Read by the author Terry Brooks
Caedon TC 1567

Except for the minimal interest in discovering what Terry Brooks sounds like, there is little of value in this album. Brooks reads with a droning tenor voice from two chapters in his book, a book I consider shallow, dull and ponderously long.

of "realistic" (in certain ways) sf novel for kids and adults of certain indiscriminate and uncritical reading preferences.

It follows NK-2, an alien entity who uses native hosts for its nourishment and locomotion, as it struggles with the body/mind of a young boy/man in ancient Babylonian.

NK-2 has crash landed on this backward planet and needs to get to the hidden galactic agent. But an enemy agent is in control and is hidden in one of the local religious leaders. Thus the survival problem of NK-2 and for his unknowing host, young Enkidu.

The Babylonian era is detailed and interesting. The book is well plotted and coherent. I rather enjoyed it for what it is, even though I wish it had been more, and wish so much of sf was not of this "young audience" ambience.

FUTURE DAY

By Gene Day
Flying Buttress, \$4.95, 1979.
POB 83, University Station,
Syracuse, NY 13210

This is a 'graphic album' which is a way of saying comic book in hardcover.

There are five short picture stories in this book, all b/w, all well done space action ideas which will all be very familiar. Heavy on action/violence.

Gene Day has a stark, "mechanical" style. One aspect about this book struck me: there is not one female in it. I assume this book is aimed at the pre-teen boy to whom girls are a drag.

RIP OFF COMIX #5

Rip Off Press, \$1.25, 1979.
POB 14158, San Francisco, CA 94114.

I'm afraid the Freak Brothers have become tamed...part of an establishment...no longer outrageous in drugs and philosophy. They're just-another-strip now, folks. Cashing in.

I never could see the attraction in Wonder War Hog's satire, and Mom Squad reeks with knee-jerk liberal feminism... Time Twisted Tales is obvious and unfunny...

I must be getting too old for this repetitive, dull, same old shit.

S.O.S (SAME OLD SHIT) IS NOT TO BE SNEERED AT. THERE IS A BIG MARKET FOR IT IN EVERY AREA OF SOCIETY.

--- ALTER EGO

WRITERS ARE NOT ROBOTS

DON'T TELL ME WHAT I SHOULD WRITE,
TELL ME HOW I CAN GET WHAT I DO
WRITE PUBLISHED.

What we have here is a lot of space and a desire to write something about me, myself and Alter.

There will be a certain amount of wooden legging in this segment. Ignore it if you don't know what 'wooden leg' means. Oh, whatthehell, I'll tell you---it means the Game of saying to yourself or others, "Gee, I'd be glad to run the hundred yard dash, but I've got this wooden leg..." or 'Hey, I'd like to make a speech at the con, but I'm so self-conscious and nervous I'd embarrass myself and you and everyone if I tried it.'

Or...
"I can't write anything except sex novels because that's just the way I'm structured, man."

Otherwise known as copping out and just plain making excuses...or excusing failure: "I can't do _____ because my _____ isn't working right...."

A little autobiography, professor! I started writing professionally in 1958. Sold the first short story to ADAM in late 1958, and sold about 100 short stories in two years to ADAM, SIR KNIGHT, and a slew of lesser known men's fiction mags of that era.

Then in 1960 or so (I've forgotten precise dates) I wrote LIKE CRAZY, MAN and sold it instantly. Then I sold SEX KITTEN... And since sex novels were far better paying than short stories, I switched to novels and haven't written a short story since.

Now, you got to remember (or be advised) that the sex fiction of the late 50s and early 60s was TAME compared to now. No four letter words, no detailed intercourse.... And the stories were stories in the strictest sense of the word, not just excuses for fuck and suck.

So I had a good grounding in basic fiction writing, and I sold about a story a week.

Let's travel back in time....

When I was ten years old I discovered science fiction and read it omnivorously from then on. All I could get my hands on. I read ASTOUNDING every month, STARTLING STORIES, THRILLING WONDER STORIES, UNKNOWN WORLDS, WEIRD TALES....Oh, and AMAZING STORIES, FANTASTIC ADVENTURES.... I had a big, valuable collection....

I wanted to be a writer. I wrote letters to the letter columns....

I published (in my early 20's) a fanzine called PSYCHOTIC....

So, when I moved out on my own,

STAR WHORES

AN EROTIC
SCIENCE FICTION NOVEL

BY
RICHARD E. GEIS



Toi, Mata, and Senya are Sex Guild Companions, contracted to serve the men on an interstellar mining ship.

On the way Out, Mata is horribly murdered.

Toi and the Captain begin to solve the murder mystery...

But life and sex must go on, with Toi and Senya caring for the needs of Mata's men as well as their own.

And when the killer is discovered, a death crisis for the ship and all aboard must be faced.

Available late December, 1979.

\$3.00 postpaid.

Limited Edition: 490 copies

First come, first served!

Send cash, check or money order to: SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW
P.O. Box 11408
Portland, OR 97211

went to Venice/Santa Monica in 1958, and started to write...WHY THE FUCK DIDN'T I WRITE SCIENCE FICTION OR FANTASY? I was well grounded, I had the skills (I sold the first story I submitted to ADAM), yet I started writing sex stories for the men's mags.

WHY?

I can't give you or me an answer. I don't know. The answer lies deep in my psyche...lurks in my subconscious...has (no doubt) tinges of frustrated incest and homosexuality. Ghod knows.

Something in me decided: sex is your fiction beat, so beat it.

And that I did...100 short stories and about 90 novels, from 1958 to now.

There have been melds----sex with sf, sex with the occult...but sex was the prime ingredient.

And now I ask myself: why in hell can't you write a nice, conforming, safe, saleable space opera? Why do you insist on the strong sex element, or the (some say) excessive violence as in ONE IMMORTAL MAN?

Are you unconsciously deliberately avoiding a writing career in sf? Are you writing stuff you know won't be acceptable to the current crop of editors?

Yeah. I guess I am.

There's something perverse operating in me. Is dot you, Alter?

"Don't drag me into this swamp, Geis! I didn't warp this mind of yours! This is the way I found it when I arrived! I just work here."

No easy solutions.

So I have faced (with equanimity and a certain degree of smugness and satisfaction) that I am in certain ways a distinctly neurotic individual. My life style is like a road strewn with huge boulders; I have coped by weaving a well-worn path between the neurotic manifestations/boulders.

I used to fight these boulders; I'd kick them, struggle to move them, try to crack them, blow them up, pretend they didn't exist. But it got tiring, unproductive, and emotionally very painful. I gradually came to accept myself as a slightly bent, twisted, warped person. I'm not especially glad I'm neurotic, but I'm also well adjusted as a practicing neurotic. Were I not as I am I'd be a truck driver or something with a different set of problems.

No, I'm remarkably content as I am. Now, if I could only find a big-name publisher for ONE IMMORTAL MAN!

I've sent OIM to Playboy Press. I have a degree of hope. We'll see.

But here I sit with some chapters of STAR WHORES completed---a novel that's 50% sex and 50% murder mystery. I can't make a lot of money selling it to the readers of SFR in a self-published edition. WHY AM I WING IT?

Shit. I could not find the murder mystery 50% and have a commercial sf novel. Why am I mickey mousing with it this way? Why, for that matter, am I spending year after year, Ghod knows how many working hours every issue, putting out fanzines? SFR, REG.... The rational writer---the rational man---would not do this. He would write (with my skills) in those areas where he could make the most money.

I'm not cursing my fate (or Fates). I'm largely content. I am a damned good fanzine editor and a very reliable fanzine publisher. And a readable fanzine writer. I win Hugoes. I'm proud of that.

I'm just ventilating...puzzling aloud at some of the forces that move and shape me.

Am I the master of my fate? Are you? I cannot make myself write "straight" science fiction. I cannot write gothics. I cannot force a murder mystery out of my fingers. All I want to do is write "my" type of fiction---highly sexual, sometimes with a high degree of violence, with often anti-social, non-conformist themes, characters...

Am I insisting on writing this way to avoid possible success? Am I into this fanzine scene so deeply to tie myself up to avoid...what? Is it sheer stubbornness and ego? Am I saying to the world: you will take me on my terms and you will publish what I choose to write! I refuse to bow to your wishes and rules and standards!

Or do I simply fear failure if I do write conformist sf? Or have I only two small talents: sex novels and fanzine editing, and unconsciously know this and avoid the failures inherent in the more competitive, big-name publishing arena?

Damned if I know.

Am I living a lie of avoidance and excuses---or living a life of individualism, unique creativity and virtue---and someday those bastards in New York will appreciate me! We'll see.

In the meantime this has been an old-fashioned Geis personal entry: honest, self-serving, and thought-provoking.

Don't you agree, Alter?

"Shit, Geis, you didn't get into how your sexual life has an effect on your professional life."

That hasn't a place in---

"Sure it does. Remember how you and the little girl next door hid out in the woodshed and---"

Alter!

"And how that Older Boy got you under the blankets when you were five years old and---"

Alter! This is not the place for those memories. Now, I personally think that the time my mother...

let it lie, let it stay in the shadow. Besides. We're out of room. "Bah! Just when all those eyes were bugging out!"

Good night, Alter!
"Good night, Geis."

I SEE I'VE NEGLECTED TO MAKE ONE thing perfectly clear. In my editorial elsewhere this issue I call for more realism, more excitement, more wonder, in sf. R-rated in many ways.

[I imagine part of my inner motive is a desire to see a few markets open up for my kind of sf.]

But I exclude STAR WHORES. SW is not an R novel. In movie rating parlance it would be XXX. I would not ever expect it to be acceptable to a "family" sf zine. Not even if I were editing a big commercial zine with the title BOLD SCIENCE FICTION.

If you buy a copy of STAR WHORES you'll be buying a hard-core sex novel with some good sf background, a murder mystery, some detailed descriptions of what I think will be the sexual mores, standards and practices of the future---about 200 years from now.

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